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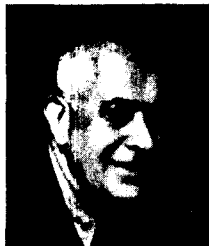
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Harold E. Stassen
Robert Patterson
J. A. Krug
Sec. of Treasury John Snyder
John L. Lewis
Sen. Robert A. Taft
Elliott Roosevelt
Earl Browder
James A. Farley

Some of the Interviewers

Ernest K. Lindley, *Newsweek*
Marquis Childs, *United Features*
Edgar Ansel Mowrer, *Press Alliance*
James Reston, *N. Y. Times*
Bert Andrews, *N. Y. Herald Tribune*
Lawrence E. Spivak, *The American Mercury*
Harold Ward, *Associated Press*
Blair Moody, *Detroit News*
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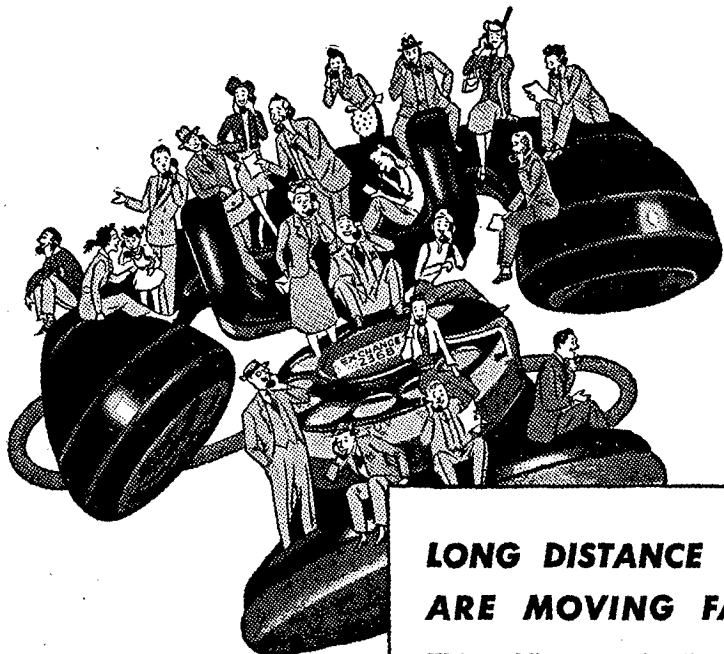
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THE CHECK LIST

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

END OF A BERLIN DIARY, by William L. Shirer, \$3.50. Knopf. Mr. Shirer here offers what appear to be only excerpts from the diary he has kept since the publication of his *Berlin Diary* in 1941. The years covered are, roughly, 1944-1945, and there is a postscript from his 1947 diary, presenting his thoughts on the current world mess. As is obvious to many now, including a large number of those who once thought they learned something from Mr. Shirer's earlier book, he is a superficial thinker and observer and commands a style that is meandering, wordy and dull. "Another war," he says pontifically, "with its giant rockets and flying bombs, will no doubt finish the human race." When Von Ribbentrop was caught, Mr. Shirer confided to his diary, "I should like to be present at his trial." After a session with Harold J. Laski, who was "his usual sparkling self, citing historical antecedents at every turn," Mr. Shirer put this down in his diary: "British socialism is a curious thing." This profound line ended his thoughts for Friday, October 12, 1945. The book is not all as pointless as these samples. There are some interesting excerpts from captured German military documents which Mr. Shirer copied when he was in Germany after V-E day. Towards the end of the book Mr. Shirer gets pretty severe with those who are concerned about Russia's actions in Europe, Asia and the United Nations. He thinks most such people are "insane," and he mimics their arguments thus: "Russia! The Bolsheviks! Gotta fight them bastards next."

THE EUROPEAN COCKPIT, by William Henry Chamberlin. \$4.00. Macmillan. Mr. Chamberlin, who recently returned from an extended

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tour through Europe, has compressed into these 330 pages one of the most lucid analyses of European politics that is available to the general reader. The author is well known as an authority on Soviet Russia, and his material on Russian foreign policy and the methods used by the USSR in subjugating her neighbors and disrupting the political life of those she cannot dominate provides a forceful, and readily comprehensible, explanation of the chaos in Europe today.

TO THE BITTER END, by Hans Bernd Gisevius. \$4.00. *Houghton Mifflin*. This is the most detailed account so far published of the conservative anti-Nazi "underground" which attempted to kill Hitler in the summer of 1944. It was almost exclusively a right-wing, Army-officer and civil-service movement which had very little broad support. Gisevius himself was a career man in government service, much of the time holding a post in the Gestapo. The tragedy of the movement was that it was deeply compromised by the same German disease which came to full flower in Nazism: nationalism and the principle of the élite. It is a pity that the publishers have not given this important story a better translation; the writing is frequently almost hopelessly involved in complex detail and cloudy philosophizing.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

YOU'RE THE BOSS, by Edward J. Flynn. \$3.00. *Viking*. The man who ruled the Bronx, New York, the greatest Democratic county in the North, and who was chairman of the Democratic National Committee in 1940-1943, which is to say, the man who helped reelect Roosevelt for a third term, here makes what is probably an honest attempt to "tell all." Human beings, especially politicians, being what they are, Mr. Flynn doubtless does a little discreet editing here and there, but he also reveals a great deal—how he was more interested in Huey Long's vote-getting abilities than in his philosophical concepts, how great a help Long was in the nomination of Roosevelt in 1932, how Roosevelt "played ball" up to a point with district leaders, why Willkie was doomed to defeat from the moment he got the GOP nomination, why machine politics is "inevitable" in a democracy,

(Continued on page 756)



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Natalie Latham Paine
CHAIRMAN
COMMON CAUSE

The American Mercury

WHY EUROPE DOESN'T TRUST US

BY

ANDRE VISSON

WE ARE living in a world tragically divided into two rival and hostile camps. We, certainly, did not want this division. We had hoped that the postwar community of nations could be organized along the idea of "One World." We were, perhaps, naïve but we were sincere. We knew that our basic principles of life were not shared by all our neighbors. But we believed — and we still believe — that American principles are infinitely better than those of our neighbors. Did they not enable this country to reach the highest level of prosperity any nation ever attained in our civilization? Did they not help the United States to become the

greatest power on earth? Would we, then, not be contributing directly to the welfare of all other nations of the world by helping them to adopt these basic principles of freedom, human dignity and competitive economy which made America what it is today?

We knew, of course, that Soviet Russia — our wartime ally and our postwar rival — was anxious to expand her way of life, which denies all political and intellectual freedom, disregards all human dignity and imposes an economy as totalitarian as its political philosophy. But practicing successfully a competitive political and economic system at home, we

ANDRE VISSON is a consultant on international affairs for the Reader's Digest. He is the author of *The Coming Struggle for Peace* and numerous magazine articles. His last contribution to the MERCURY was "Will the Communists Win France?", in the May 1947 issue.

naïvely believed that we could also engage in peaceful competition between our system and that of Soviet Russia on the international level, in the postwar world.

It therefore came to us as a shock to discover that this aspiration was just a "noble dream." The "Iron Curtain" cut Germany, Europe and the rest of the world not only into two rival camps but into increasingly hostile ones. Soviet Russia has imposed her leadership upon all those peoples having the great misfortune to be living east of the Iron Curtain and has made threatening moves to expand it to the Greeks, the Italians and the French, to say nothing of the Germans.

We have accepted the Soviet challenge by generously offering the democratic nations of the West our political and moral leadership, together with our assistance and protection.

But I am afraid we are in for great disillusionment if we believe that Western Europe is ready to welcome and accept our leadership without reservation. Western Europe, of course, looks to us for urgent economic help and continued military protection. But very few people in England and France are happy at seeing the leadership of the Western World pass from the weakened hands of their old and proud nations into the younger, less experienced but much more robust ones of the United States. And too many people in these two countries — and in the rest of Western Europe as well — seriously

question our ability to assume the moral and political leadership that history has thrust upon us.

Western Europeans admit that they need us badly as both "bankers" and "military policemen." But they are afraid that we are as yet neither politically nor psychologically prepared to become their leaders.

This is the disturbing conclusion I reached after visiting Western Europe last summer.

II

Western Europeans are still obsessed by the American record between the two world wars. They are gratified by America's determination to participate in international affairs. But they cannot help wondering how consistent and continuing will be such participation. They are worried every time they hear some American announce that isolationism may — or even should — again raise its terrifying head. The French shudder when they are told by high American officials in Germany, that unless western Germany becomes self-supporting by increasing the production of its steel industry, the American taxpayer will get tired of carrying the financial burden of occupation indefinitely, and will urge the withdrawal of the American army from Europe. They are terrified by both the prospect of American withdrawal and the resurgence of a strong Germany.

Western Europeans feel that it is very difficult for Americans to understand Europe's extremely complex

problems, most of which are deeply rooted in her old and turbulent history. The American people advanced so rapidly from their colonial period to the status of the world's Number One Superpower, that they have hardly had time to look back and ponder over the impact of history on the destiny of a nation. Moreover, Americans have until recently lived with expanding geography. While growing as a nation, they were also pushing back the frontiers of their land. So, believe Western Europeans, it will take Americans several generations to realize what the Europeans long ago realized, that a nation cannot escape either its history or its geography!

The successive leaders of Western European civilization — the Greeks, Romans, French, British — had not only military and economic, but also cultural and moral, superiority over the other European nations of their time. Western Europeans cannot contest the military and economic superiority of the United States. But they believe, as the London *Economist* puts it, that America's present wealth and strength are not "the result of a superior virtue" but "are merely due to better luck." And they are especially convinced that despite their weakened political and economic position, the nations of Western Europe still maintain their cultural and intellectual superiority. "America is a great military and economic power, but a great moral and intellectual impotence," said C.

F. Ramuz, the well known Swiss novelist, summarizing the opinion of the United States held by many Western European intellectuals. "We can forgive you Americans anything but not your moral superiority," said a high British official to this writer.

Western Europeans, especially those in countries with colonial possessions, such as England, France, Belgium and Holland, resent and mistrust the "anti-colonial" philosophy of American foreign policy. They resent its moralizing tone and they suspect it to be a vehicle of American "economic imperialism." They know that the United States does not covet any foreign territory. But they suspect the United States of always being in search of bigger and better markets for its goods. Their own prosperity being determined by the amount of their foreign trade, Western Europeans are inclined to believe that foreign trade is going to become, if it is not already, the main determining factor of American prosperity. America's mass production is a nightmare to them. They live in fear that a day will come — and soon — when American industry, having satisfied all domestic demands, will, with one stroke, sweep away the modest amount of capital and consumer goods which the industrialized countries of Western Europe can still export to Latin America, Africa and Asia.

I heard many Western Europeans develop this argument. They were by no means Communists, or even

fellow-travelers, but substantial conservative citizens — industrialists, bankers, economists. They all looked toward the United States for protection against the imperialism of Soviet Russia. But at the same time they were talking of the “economic imperialism” of the United States.

III

No country in Western Europe has greater and closer ties with the United States than England. But it is in England that one hears some of the most acid criticisms of America and of American policies. And these criticisms do not necessarily come from left-wing Labor circles only. The leading London weekly, the *Economist*, has no special sympathies for the Labor government and can not be suspected of any desire to whitewash it. But it believes that the fault for the present British economic and financial crisis “is far more America’s than Britain’s.” “Not many people in this country,” writes the *Economist*, “believe the Communist thesis that it is the deliberate and conscious aim of American policy to ruin Britain and everything that Britain stands for. But the evidence can certainly be read that way.” And this influential British publication gives us serious warning: “American opinion should be warned that over here, in Great Britain, one has the feeling of being driven into a corner by a complex of American actions and insistencies which, in combination, are quite intolerable.”

The French have no better understanding of American motives than have the British. A leading French anti-Communist rightist weekly, *Carrefour*, reproaches the French government for its unconditional acceptance of the Marshall Plan. “We have acted,” writes *Carrefour*, “as if the Marshall Plan were a touching gift of a generous grandmother, when it must constitute an exchange of services, equally acceptable, profitable and honorable for both parties. The United States needs the Plan as much as we do. But our Socialist governments of the Fourth Republic display in their relations with the United States the same assiduous compliance which the Radical-Socialist governments of the Third Republic had for Great Britain.”

European history and economic conditions did not permit Europeans to develop a humanitarian conception of life, which I believe to be one of the chief American qualities. Divided by centuries-old history into rival and fighting national communities, Europeans could not develop the same feeling of international solidarity in which the stronger and the more prosperous should help the weaker and the poorer, as did Americans who came from various lands to merge into one nation.

Western Europeans become uneasy and suspicious whenever they hear an American emphasize the humanitarian conceptions of American aid to Europe. A leader of the right wing of the French Christian democratic

party (MRP), which fights for the spiritual rebirth of France, confessed to this writer that he often felt embarrassed by what he termed the "missionary complex" of American foreign policy and the "preaching tone" of American political statements.

Western Europeans understand why America wants to contain Soviet expansion in their countries. They understand that should the Red Army succeed in reaching the Atlantic Coast, it would constitute a threat to American security. But having for centuries lived a life distinctly different from that of Eastern Europeans, they have not yet realized the common destiny that all Europeans share in a rapidly shrinking Europe. So they wonder why Americans are taking the interests of Eastern European peoples living behind the Iron Curtain so close to their hearts. They sympathize with the plight of those poor people. But being unable to help them, they are cautious in expressing their sympathy and their indignation. And they cannot help feeling fearful that America's active interest in Eastern Europe may precipitate a new world war—a contingency that Western Europeans fear above all.

The common denominator of Western European peoples is, indeed, fear. The members of the Moscow Politburo must be well aware of this as they try to exploit it by both acts and clever propaganda. Molotov's "no" to the Marshall Plan in Paris, Vy-

shinsky's tirades against "American warmongers" at Lake Success, the establishment of an "Information Center" in Belgrade, are a series of increasingly striking moves in a gigantic scare campaign which Moscow is waging against Western Europe.

Western Europeans believe Americans to be as peace-minded and peace-loving as they themselves. But they realize that Americans are not as frightened of the next war as they are. Indeed, Americans can hardly imagine the feelings of the inhabitants of London, Rotterdam, Antwerp, Florence, Genoa, or a city in Normandy living and working among the shambles of bombed-out homes and churches. With memories of the Nazi occupation still fresh, Western Europeans shudder at the prospect of a possible Red occupation.

IV

The immediate worry in London, Paris and Rome is how to get the badly needed dollars for the purchase of food, fuel and indispensable raw materials. But one of the long-range speculations in the highest quarters in Paris and Rome is whether the American army will fight the Russians on the Elbe River or in the Pyrenees Mountains; at the gates of Trieste or along the so-called Gothic Line?

This is the state of nervous tension in which Western Europe is living in 1947. It knows that it is dependent on the United States for its survival. It knows that on all vital issues it is in

agreement with the United States. But its political and economic language is different from that spoken by Americans.

In America, for example, progressive Republican Presidential candidate Harold Stassen, in order to improve his political position with the voters, opposes any help to European countries with socialistic régimes. In England the Conservatives, in order to improve their political position, endorse the nationalization measures of the Labor government.

Terrorized by Soviet Russia, Western Europe casts hopeful but fearful glances in the direction of the United States. It complains that it is not understood by Americans. But it also fails to understand Americans. It does not understand what Americans mean by "free enterprise," which they imagine to be in a practically chaotic state, free of any control whatever. They do not understand what Americans mean by "Americanism," which Jean-Paul Sartre, creator of the new French philosophy, *Existentialism*, describes as "an implacable machine . . . a monstrous complex of myths, values, recipes, slogans, figures and rites." They do not understand American democracy, which they believe to be threatened by explosive racial and religious conflicts. They do not understand America's humanitarian concepts. They do not understand American plain talk.

They want to make a desperate, last-minute effort to organize them-

selves with American help and under American protection, but not under American leadership — if possible, halfway between the rival Soviet and American superpowers, whose conflict they fear above all, as it would be fought on their soil.

"Capitalists, fascists, Marxists are all alike" exclaims George Bernanos, the widely-read, rather conservative French philosophical novelist in his latest book, *France Against the Robots*. "Capitalists, fascists, Marxists have all lost the sense of Freedom and brought upon mankind a general oppression." And Bernanos concludes that the state of the world is so dreadful that "even President Truman, this business politician without any race, culture or past, who should have blind confidence in the Machine Civilization," has realized the danger, and has warned Americans of the threatening catastrophe.

Western Europeans do not need to be warned of this catastrophe. They feel its hot breath.

The fundamental difference between Americans and Europeans in this crucial year of 1947 is this: The Americans, in order to assume the leadership thrust upon them by Destiny, must be frightened into taking action in the face of the imminent danger. The Europeans, in order to accept American leadership, must be assured that Americans not only have the necessary strength to meet the danger, but that they are willing to use their strength, and know how to do it both effectively and intelligently.

HOW TO RUN A RAILROAD

BY ROBERT R. YOUNG

Two years ago I began a campaign against abuses in the American railway system. My main object has been to get the people who ride the railroads some of the comforts and services to which they are entitled. As part of this campaign, I started a fight for better railroad cars, in which I led off with an advertisement headlined: "Why Must Sleeping Car Passengers Put Up With Rolling Tenelements?" Whereupon the railroads flooded the country with advertisements of the sumptuous "dreamline" trains which appear to be going into service tomorrow.

What these advertisements failed to reveal was that if these railroads go on ordering cars at their postwar snail's pace of 1500 a year, it will take them 28 years to replace their 44,000 antiquated coaches, Pullmans, diners and baggage cars. Among these old rattlers are 5200 Pullman sleepers with an average age of 27 years and 15,000 coaches averaging 28 years! Some of them date back 40 years — to the days of Teddy Roosevelt. During the past twelve months, if the

Chesapeake & Ohio is excluded, only 112 passenger cars have been ordered. It all adds up to the fact that, even by 1950, the rail patron will at best have only one chance in six of getting on a new car.

Many more freight cars have also been scrapped in the past thirty years than have been built — though our population has increased 40 millions, and we now have the world to feed as well as ourselves.

If they were really sincere, those who control the railroads would already have placed so many orders that manufacturers would be gearing themselves up to reach an output of 15,000 passenger cars a year in 1949. This they could do if assured of a decent backlog of orders. Then, continuing at the same rate, they could turn out enough to replace today's antiquated fleet by 1951. By that time everybody would be riding in new cars.

These new passenger cars, along with vigorous promotion of rail travel, would create such a demand for space that 100,000 passenger cars would be needed. The industry could

ROBERT R. YOUNG is chairman of the board of the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company. His controversies with the banking interests who have hitherto controlled the railroads have attracted widespread public attention in recent years, and he has been the subject of profiles in *Time* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. He has contributed to many magazines.

replace such a fleet every seven to ten years, meanwhile reducing costs to as little as a third of present-day prices by taking advantage of planned volume production and competitive buying. It costs three times as much per pound to build a railway car as a much more complex automobile because, believe it or not, all our railway cars are virtually tailor-made at present.

Railroads that plead poverty as an excuse for their ancient cars are committing a fraud and a lie on the public. Even bankrupt railroads can buy new cars today by issuing equipment trust certificates — like first mortgages on houses — at interest rates of about two per cent, and borrowing nearly 100 per cent on the cost of new rolling stock. Experience shows that such new cars so stimulate traffic that they not only pay off the mortgage but earn a handsome profit. For example, two new streamliners which have been running on the Pere Marquette, between Detroit and Grand Rapids, since August 1946, have been so successful that the run has increased its revenue 80 per cent. This increase in revenue will equal the cost of the trains in a few years.

Practicing what we preach, the C & O lines last winter placed a \$27 million order for 307 passenger cars to replace every coach and sleeper on the main line. Full delivery has been promised by the end of next summer. If the other railroads had done the same — if they had really meant what they said in their advertise-

ments — they would have at least 25,000 cars on order. Actually, they have ordered only 3000 since V-J Day.

People can make up their own minds what to expect from the old guard of railroading from a recent piece of testimony before the Interstate Commerce Commission. The railroads as a group were opposing our attempt to bring new ideas and \$75 million of our own new money to the decaying Pullman Company. The witness was Charles D. Young (no relation), Vice President of Purchases for the Pennsylvania Railroad. He ridiculed our offer to order complete replacement of all Pullman equipment immediately and replace it thereafter every seven to ten years at our own risk, and was scandalized at my assertion that most of the nation's Pullmans were obsolete after 25 years.

"Apparently a deliberate effort is being made to deceive the public on this point," he told the Commission. "The structure of a car does not become obsolete in any such period." He testified that 30 years was the normal life of a coach — and that even then it was perfectly adequate for service.

We sometimes see automobiles of the days of Diamond Jim Brady chugging vigorously along at fairs and expositions. These vehicles are perfectly adequate for service by Pennsylvania standards.

A like attitude on the part of the Association of American Railroads leaders, plus a long record of turning

back the clock on new equipment and service led the C & O system to withdraw from the Association and form a new association to get something done in railroading. It is called the Federation for Railway Progress and already has 14,000 members. It operates with the simple purpose of establishing a sound and progressive American transportation system. It is designed to go over the heads of the railroad's brass hats and reach the real boss of the railroads — the stockholder.

It cuts across traditional association lines to include in, and not out, both railway stockholders and labor. For as little as a two-dollar membership fee, any citizen can, for the first time, have a voice in American railroading. Railroads, their suppliers and shippers come in for other classes of membership. The C & O lines are the original members but all other roads have been invited. I am not expecting any of them to sign up, for reasons that will soon become evident.

I want to make it clear; however, that the Federation is not a pressure group working for special or selfish interests. We work with an advisory committee of eminent citizens to help us keep every objective purely in the public interest. This committee includes Admiral William F. Halsey; Philip LaFollette, former governor of Wisconsin; Charles Edison, former governor of New Jersey and now president of Thomas A. Edison, Inc.; M. Lincoln Schuster, of Simon & Schuster, publishers; former Con-

gresswoman Clare Boothe Luce; and Albert S. Goss, Master of the National Grange.

The Federation is appealing to the public in advertisements and press campaigns against backward and selfish railroad practices. It is fighting for better equipment *now* and for better passenger and freight service. It is carrying on an aggressive program to win the public back to rail travel. But its first job is to tell the people, without fear or prejudice, of the destructive practices that one sees behind the scenes in the railroad industry.

II

Railroads are in the marrow of every American's bones. Who hasn't been thrilled by their part in the breaking of the prairie and the building of the world's greatest industrial nation? What farm boy hasn't felt a longing for adventure when he looked up from the fields to watch the Dixie Flier speed over the trestle? Where is the town boy grown up who cannot remember barefooting it down to the station to gaze at those strange faces from other lands? The railroads are part of our growing up. Sentimentally and functionally, they belong to us all. Intrinsically, they belong to five million security holders and 73 million insurance policy-holders who, with their dependents, include nearly all of us.

Strangely, the stewardship of this great heritage is not in the hands of the people — the owners — at all.

It has been usurped and pirated by a small and selfish group of New York financiers apparently interested only in the devious ways in which they can turn those vast properties to their own use. For three generations Morgan and Kuhn Loeb dictated the policies of the railroads without having a dollar of permanent ownership. Now and then, independent figures like Harriman, Vanderbilt, Mellon, or Van Sweringen bobbed up with a substantial ownership interest, but eventually financial or social pressures brought them into line with the interests of the banking houses. The Harrimans and Mellons, presumably, also, to cash in on this adverse interest, organized their own banking firms, not to compete with, but to become auxiliary to the acknowledged masters.

This sorry state of things became accentuated in the thirties when 37 of our 135 Class 1 railroads — more than 30 per cent of our mileage — went into bankruptcy. With the help of the RFC, the ICC and other agencies of government, these railroads were put even more firmly into the hands of this small New York club. The device used was as archaic as most railroad equipment — the odorous *voting trust*, which had been outlawed by the New York Stock Exchange even in the wide-open days of Richard Whitney's presidency of that institution. It was during his administration that the voting trust abuse became so widespread that an indignant public opinion

caused the Exchange to refuse to admit voting trust certificates to the privilege of Stock Exchange listing. Getting themselves and their confederates appointed to these trusts allegedly to "protect" the railroads, the bankers and their affiliated insurance companies have taken over the voting rights of the stockholder and intend never to let go even though they may not have a single dollar at stake.

It is shocking that our own government, which is duty bound to act consistently against monopoly, should have become the willing accomplice to Wall Street in this gigantic piracy — probably the greatest financial sleight-of-hand of all time — in which billions of honest dollars of security holders were unjustifiably squeezed out of such great and irreplaceable properties as the St. Paul, the Northwestern, the Denver and Rio Grande and the Western Pacific. There has not been an insurance policy holder, to say nothing of a railroad security holder, who has not been injured in his estate, directly or indirectly, by these unconscionable reorganizations perpetrated with the aid of agencies of that very same government which was responsible for the Securities Exchange Act, which was to have forever put to an end this very kind of thing.

The railroads and their suppliers carry huge New York bank balances which the Club can invest in government bonds and enjoy the return. This is one reason why many of these bankrupt roads have left tens of mil-

lions of dollars lying idle in the banks. This money should long before have gone into paying off the RFC or into the purchase at a discount of the railroad's bonds, which have gone begging for bids on the New York Stock Exchange. During the past ten years, when C & O's weak subsidiaries, Pere Marquette and Nickel Plate, were using their hard-earned dollars to rehabilitate their physical properties and to put their financial houses in order, thus saving money for every single one of their stockholders, these Club-controlled properties allowed hundreds of millions of dollars to accumulate idly in the banks at the very moment they were crying "poverty" as an excuse to squeeze their stockholders out of their now rich properties.

The bankers have other motives for not using these cash balances of our railroads providently. To extinguish a railroad's debt is to make it impossible for the bankers to profit by refinancing these bonds again and still again. It was the re-churning of the vast debts of the railroads — at fat spreads and at all too frequent intervals — which made yachtsmen of an exclusive set of New York bankers for several generations. These bankers enjoyed the unique, if improper and unfair, advantage of being on both the buying and selling sides of nearly every bond deal in America. They were thus able to fix their own "take." It is easy to see that the take, over a period of time, might equal the cost of the railroads.

It has been through a system of friendly interlocking directorates among the banks, the railroads and the insurance companies that J. P. Morgan and Kuhn Loeb, the Mellons and the Harrimans, along with other Eastern bankers, have been able to dictate the policies of the railroads without a dollar of permanent ownership. C & O put an end to this long-standing banking racket by establishing the principle of competitive bidding in the sale of rail and public utility bond issues. This has already saved shippers and consumers an estimated half-billion dollars.

III

Our new Federation is fighting to return the control of these railroads to their five million security holders. For the first time, these widely scattered owners of the country's railroads are being brought together to take concerted action and exert their influence on the officials of their roads. When necessary, we will seek corrective legislation.

The AAR railroads have no incentive to modernize their equipment as long as they can satisfy their boss, the banker, by doing things the easy way. To make sure that some one of the 135 railroads did not slip up and embarrass them by introducing something new, they went to the lengths of drawing up agreements, it is charged by the Justice Department, to do such amazing things as disconnect the air-conditioning in cars of a handful of progressive railroads

when these cars came onto their lines. The Justice Department also charges that they agreed to limit and restrain advertising; limit schedules to the speed of the slowest; and prohibit movies, radio and other improvements.

I have found that the American people are fed up with the service they receive from the non-competitive railroads. I have learned this through my own little Gallup poll — a cross-section of public opinion shown in tens of thousands of letters which men and women in every walk of life have written to me after reading our campaign ads. Their “beefs” are countless; their hunger for something better a little touching.

Here is an excerpt from one of them:

Recently I had a chance to study the transportation systems in the days of Abraham Lincoln. I note that little progress has been made since. When I get on a train, I would like to see a movie, read a book in the train library or listen to a radio. My great objection to train travel is that one has to sit there and stare into blank space for hours at a time.

The thousands who wrote these letters are sick of square-wheeled cars, dancing soup, coaches that are frigid in winter and steaming in summer, repulsive meals and discourtesies from employees. The railroads blamed that on the war, but my correspondents remember these abuses from long before. Now they're asking for something decent. Unfortunately, the way things are going they won't get it.

If the railroads had really meant

to modernize at the end of the war, plenty of streamlined coaches and comfortable sleepers could have been made available on the trains of the forties. Every day-coach passenger could be riding in the car of his dreams year after next. Every other passenger could have boarded one next year. He could be gliding out of his station under modern power, reclining comfortably in a lounge chair designed to fit his body instead of being propped bolt upright in a back-breaker as hard as a church bench and as dusty as an old haymow. He would not have to be yanked out of his shoes every time the train starts. He could get under way so smoothly and quietly that only a glance out of the window would tell him that the train was moving.

Car trucks of late design would have removed the sway that now sends him sprawling in the aisles. Instead of coughing and sneezing half the time in soot and dust, at the mercy of hot and cold blasts, he could always be breathing conditioned air under electronic temperature control. These are some of the basic comforts which every traveler has a right to expect.

Steel shortages and labor troubles since the war are no excuse. They have not prevented us from getting new automobiles which we need much less than new sleepers.

The passenger has a right to expect a good deal more than new equipment. There is no reason why he should be inconvenienced by having the toilets locked at stations. On

trains with traveling septic tanks or other devices, the conductor could keep his keys in his pocket. New equipment has removed any excuse for the toilet conditions which have so long been a health hazard.

Coaches are now being manufactured for immediate order that have such innovations as individual seat radios, libraries with popular books for all ages, news tickers and telephone service for passengers' use while the train is in motion. There are nursery compartments with diaper changing rooms, pantries for formula preparation and the children's own movie theatres. There are attractive recreation lounges and roomy diners.

If they want new patrons, the railroads will have to do something about a few dozen of today's stupid annoyances — in and out of trains. Ask the average passenger what he dreads most about rail travel and you'll find buying a ticket high on his list. Here's part of a letter I got from one disgusted traveler.

"I have been boiling inwardly about this ticket matter for years," he wrote, "wondering when the railroads would wake up and begin to modernize. Last week I missed a train while standing in line and watching a clerk with a quill pen (I am sure it was a quill pen) slowly filling out, in a crabbed hand, the 30 or 40 blanks on a typical ticket. I thought to myself: 'When General Grant traveled, this is exactly the way they made out the tickets, and the railroads haven't learned a damn thing since.'"

My own railroad has a new system which frees such weary customers of these inconveniences. It's all very simple. The traveler merely phones in for his reservation and gets his seat number over the phone. At the train gate, he is met by an attendant who checks off his name and waves him on. He pays on the train. The customers' nerves and the time wasted in two or more trips to the station are both saved. With this a liberal system of credits is provided which travelers can use on any trip originating on our lines without handling a lot of cash.

As part of the "pay-as-you-go" arrangement, we are installing a new setup to handle all reservations from along the whole line in a single centrally located reservation bureau, constantly in touch with trains in motion. The patron's local call from any point along the line automatically dials in to this control station. This system frees us from the vast duplication of phone calls and telegrams necessary today. It makes most of today's stations obsolete — too large for their purpose. Much of the space now used for reservation and ticket offices can be converted to shops, movie theatres, restaurants or the like.

The railroads must learn the meaning of courtesy if they want to stay in business. Taking their attitude from the men at the top, trainmen treat passengers as inferiors instead of guests. The many employees are rarely courteous, let alone helpful. In all justice, this is partly because they have too much to do. A great load can

be taken off busy trainmen and a whole new atmosphere created by employing hostesses and other attendants to help travelers on the train and in the station.

IV

To help the railroad passenger voice his righteous demands for courteous treatment, the Federation distributes a complaint questionnaire to travelers — through railroads, hotels, travel agencies and the like. When complaints, or compliments, are received by the Federation they are sent on to the railroad concerned. The president is asked to send the Federation a copy of his reply.

The tyrannical custom of tipping on railroads not only annoys the passenger, but attacks the self-respect of the employee. We have put a non-tipping rule into effect on the C & O Line and have fully compensated our employees through their wages for what they have been asked to sacrifice in tips.

Across the street from the Pennsylvania Station in Cleveland, opened in 1866, a billboard was put up 27 years ago by the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce for the incoming passenger to read: DON'T JUDGE THIS CITY BY ITS DEPOT. The Pennsylvania Railroad's passengers still use the station.

Though they don't all date back to Civil War days, most stations shame their communities. They are abominable — ugly, dank, smelly, dirty and so badly lit that you can't read a

newspaper while waiting for your train. Almost every station in the country should be rebuilt or modernized. There should be good janitor service, comfortable seats, decent lights for reading, a pleasant interior and a few diversions and rest rooms at least above the par of a roadside filling station. There should be service desks with hostesses to meet the public. Station staffs should no longer be allowed to hide themselves crustily away in grilled dungeons and chew tobacco.

The station should be designed to fit into local landscaping and zoning plans. Congested areas should be bypassed. Grades and curves should be reduced. It is up to the railroads to help beautify the areas they have made ugly.

Today, ten to twenty times as much travel passes along the highways as along the railroads. Less than 20 per cent of rail passengers travel for pleasure, according to one recent survey, while 80 per cent travel for business and other reasons. Give the rail passenger better equipment and service, then tell him about it and these percentages could be reversed. Why have the railroads never given the vacationer, who wishes to see our National Parks, a cruise train? Tens of thousands are attracted yearly to less scenic areas abroad in cruise ships.

Once it had something to offer, a good railway association could open up travel agencies in every community. It could offer special low-rate excursions along all historic routes,

particularly for boys and girls. Every youngster in California ought to see the Statue of Liberty and every child in New England the Redwoods. On such tours along our lines, we found that 90 per cent of the youngsters had never been on a train. Every American youngster should get a train ride, without cost if necessary, in line with that first principle of merchandising, the free introductory package.

American business did not become great by agreements not to improve service and facilities. Would men really interested in progress run a 30-billion-dollar industry on a promotion budget of five million dollars? That's less than the sales and advertising expense of a good energetic toothpaste manufacturer. No business can prosper in the hands of adverse interests or defeatists. Those men who do not believe in the future of the railroad industry, or who have conflicting interests, ought to get out — or be driven out.

Unless there is a change in railway policies, the demand for rail travel will decline until train operation and schedules are reduced to the point where passenger service may virtually disappear. The same vicious circle will operate in the freight field, because of the superior courtesy and service offered by new and more progressive media. Then further inroads will be made in freight revenues, to the point where railroads will be left only such bulk commodities as coal and ore. Then, the railroads will have to be subsidized by the taxpayer as they are in many other countries where transportation costs are ten times as high as here. Just as our economy has always prospered where there was cheap and efficient transportation, and declined where there was not, so may our vast industrial and transportation machine both decline together. Unless there is a turn for the better, the American railroads will be headed for insolvency and nationalization.



RENTS WERE LOW IN GREENWICH VILLAGE

BY FLOYD DELL

RENTS were low in Greenwich Village; that was why artists and writers lived there. This was explained to me on my arrival, in 1913, by one of my Village "aunts." In Greenwich Village, as in every small community, there were "aunts" who were familiar with Village history, knew all about everyone, and, kindly but severe, were intent upon maintaining community standards. I, a favorite but wayward nephew, was called on the carpet more than once by my Village "aunts." The one I have here in mind was a leading member of the Village intelligentsia, who disapproved of the "bohemian riff-raff" which even then threatened to give that nice little community a bad name.

But first about the low rents. As New York expanded swiftly in the nineteenth century, the middle-class residents of lower Manhattan fled uptown and out of town, leaving behind them blocks of substantially built brick houses, four stories high, to be inhabited by immigrants. The immigrant flood spread northward as far as

Washington Square. The houses on the north side of the Square still maintained their aristocratic dignity, but those on the south side became part of a swarming Italian district.

It was artists and writers, I was told, who halted the northward march of immigrant poverty. They leased some of the grimy old houses on Washington Square South and fixed up studios and homes in them, with a kitchen and bathroom on each floor. Artists and writers are bold and fearless carpenters, plumbers and interior decorators. Italian sub-landladies also did some modernizing, but the rents remained low because there was no central heating.

There were fireplaces in those large high-ceilinged rooms; coal and wood were brought by Nick from his cellar around the corner. Italian restaurants, where food was good, cheap and plentiful, became the social centers of artists, writers and intelligentsia. A bohemia grew up there in the eighties and nineties, long referred to as "Washington Square" though it spread northwest into Greenwich Vil-

FLOYD DELL *knows Greenwich Village as it was as well as anybody else now living. He was one of its leading characters, took part in many of its activities and has written extensively about it. He is a poet, novelist and playwright of eminence. Perhaps his best-known books are Moon-Calf, Janet March and The Briary Bush.*

lage, a neighborhood of narrow and crooked streets that remained a secluded island between the great streams of traffic. It was the painters, with their traditional disregard of middle-class standards, who made it a bohemia, celebrated as such by Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey in *Songs from Vagabondia*.

Those authentic bohemian glories had faded out before I came there. The oldtime bohemians, it was said, had prospered, become stuffed shirts, and moved uptown. Anyway, times had changed in the Village. Its best people were now seriously interested in social reform, votes for women, the labor movement — and, of course, in art and literature, especially the kinds devoted to social progress.

I was warned not to use the term “bohemian” in Greenwich Village circles; if I did, I would be scorned and pitied, if not ostracized. So said my earnest Village “aunt.” The *real* Villagers, she pointed out, paid their bills and bathed regularly. That was certainly true. And why not? Those Greenwich Villagers were school-teachers, college professors, social workers, doctors, lawyers, engineers and other professional people. As for the artists and writers who then lived in the Village — such as John Sloan and Art Young, Mary Heaton Vorse, Inez Haynes Gillmore, Susan Glasspell, Theodore Dreiser — they already had positions of importance in the realm of art and letters. None of those Villagers were what I called poor; some of them owned houses in

the country, in Westchester County, in Connecticut, New Jersey, or on the Massachusetts coast. They had most of the familiar middle-class virtues, and in addition some of their own; they were an obviously superior lot of people.

II

I, a newcomer believed to be a young fellow of promise, was kindly welcomed into the Village, and was soon provided with a part-time editorial job which left me considerable freedom for my own literary work. If I burned the midnight oil and kept out of the idle company of what my earnest Village “aunt” referred to as “bohemian riff-raff,” I might in due time make a name for myself, assist the upward march of humanity and own a house in the country.

But already, in my first few days, I had had some glimpses of the bohemian side of life in Greenwich Village; and it had allured and charmed me. This Village bohemia was composed in part of young people, economically insecure and with uncertain or unproved talents — or with perhaps no real talents, but only artistic temperaments. Who could say? They depended chiefly on hack jobs and precarious free-lancing. Their work habits were not always good, their money habits were sometimes rash and careless. These bohemian circles were adorned and fringed by very attractive young women, who no doubt should have been getting themselves married to rising young busi-

nessmen back in their home towns but were unreasonably fond of the company of artists and writers of dubious prospects.

To me this bohemia seemed a place where improbable and delightful things could happen. And so, I found, they did, for, in spite of my good standing in the more sedate circles of the Village, I found myself drawn into bohemian life. This was in part a matter of economics. My editorial earnings long remained the same, while the cost of living—it was during World War I—rose steadily. There were periods when I was out of a job and dependent on the irregular and uncertain gains of free-lancing. I barely managed to keep my head above water; I was one of the intellectual proletariat, sure enough.

However, nobody ever starved in Greenwich Village. Some Village restaurateurs made a point of keeping their patrons fed in their periods of hard luck; and one could always get a bountiful free lunch with a five-cent glass of beer at a saloon which we called the Working Girls' Home, where once the poet John Masfield had worked between voyages.

My tastes were simple, and if there had been no girls in Greenwich Village I could have lived there almost as inexpensively as Thoreau did in his cabin on Walden Pond. That was the worst of having little money: I hadn't much to spend on girls. But when my finances were low I could always take a girl for a ride on the Staten Island ferry, from which at night the sky-

scrapers with their occasional lighted windows looked magically beautiful. Or I could take her for a ride on top of a Fifth Avenue bus, stopping at a little restaurant at 110th Street, where there was good coffee with real cream in it at five cents a cup. Often I was able to stand her a spaghetti dinner with red ink. Sometimes I would take her to Broad's, on Third Street, where there was sawdust on the floor and where we would have big thick juicy steaks that cost all of sixty cents apiece. Or I would appear at her place with a paper bag filled with such delicatessen as salami, pickles, cheese and crackers, plus a bottle of milk, which is very nourishing. And, of course, when I was flush, I would take her to a bang-up dinner in the basement of the Brevoort. Food in Greenwich Village ranked high as a form of entertainment. In addition, we had conversational resources.

When my fortunes were at their worst, I was lucky enough to get an apartment in a house at 11 Christopher Street. This was not one of the fine old brick residences, but a tiny little two-story wooden house, a relic of times long past. My ground-floor apartment cost eight dollars a month; later, I moved into the larger apartment upstairs, which cost twelve dollars. There was a cold-water tap, but no bathroom and no electric light and no furnace. Years later, in the middle twenties, when I was homesick on the French Riviera, I was told by a tourist friend that my old Christopher

Street house had been razed that summer; the past came back vividly to my mind, and I wrote a sentimental ballad beginning

Is it still there, I wonder, down in Christopher Street,
That little rickety house of ours where
life was young and sweet?

III

When I arrived in the Village, its intelligentsia was socially dominant, social reform was its keynote, and it was expanding to take in Union Square. But the wartime years turned the Village into a melting-pot in which all group boundaries were dissolved. Artists, writers, intellectuals, liberals, radicals, IWWs, bohemians, well-to-do patrons, onlookers — all were hurled into a miscellaneous social melee in which earnestness and frivolity were thoroughly intermingled. The “real” Greenwich Village of my discriminating “aunt” was swept away in the flood. I had something to do with this transformation. I helped in organizing a series of fancy-dress balls to which I gave the name “Pagan Rout,” and I wrote and produced frivolous one-act plays. Fancy-dress balls and amateur theatricals are notoriously effective in provoking social disorder.

All was not beer and skittles in my own career; as literary and dramatic critic, essayist, writer of short stories, special articles, plays and poems, I burned a good deal of midnight oil, and my writings attracted the attention of a couple of publishers who

wanted to know when I would have a novel ready. I was working, by fits and starts, on a novel, *Moon-Calf*, which progressed slowly. There are sometimes more important things in life than finishing a novel, especially when one is under thirty.

I might have had time to finish that novel if there had been no girls. I myself was shy and unsocial and did not care for parties and balls. But girls seemed to like to go to parties and balls; and so I took them. I found that a few drinks made me feel less shy and more sociable. A thousand or so people seem to remember me as the fellow who shinnied up a lofty iron pillar to the ceiling of Webster Hall and unscrewed a pocketful of electric light bulbs; but I think it must have been Harry Kemp. Anyway, being somewhat conspicuously on view on public occasions of a frivolous kind, I was taken by some outsiders as a “merry Villager.” Heaven knows, perhaps I was. The world was plunging through the horrors of war, and I was writing light-hearted little plays about young lovers — in one of which Edna St. Vincent Millay, a young newcomer to the Village, made her début charmingly as an actress. The future, for all of us, was uncertain; and the more darkly uncertain it became, the higher rose the tide of gaiety in Greenwich Village.

Drafted, I went to camp, cheerfully prepared to help save the world for democracy, but was sent back to stand trial, along with Jack Reed, Max Eastman and Art Young, on a

charge of attempting to overthrow the government by writing an article in defense of conscientious objectors. The government wanted us sent to prison for twenty years.

Midnights of revel
And noondays of song —

that was what Greenwich Village had been like, back in the gay nineties, as described in *Songs from Vagabondia*. Something had happened to the world since then — even to bohemia. Politics had made a conquest of the ivory towers of art and literature. As for me, I belonged to the neo-Aristotelian school of aesthetics which holds that “certainly the world should be reformed: but not by novels.” My novel was still unfinished. If I went to prison for twenty years, I would have lots of time to finish it; there would be no girls to distract me there. Perhaps it was just as well that I had gone a-Maying while I had the chance.

Peace came, and it was considered that the Republic might survive even with us subversive characters at large. Flowers covered the battlefields, and many May days lay ahead for living lads and lasses. But I was thirty-one, an age when one should begin to consider one’s future. There was that novel of mine, waiting to be finished, and a publisher hopefully expecting it.

Yes, I thought I must sit down and finish that novel. But a girl with yellow hair came into the Village — and I felt that the novel must wait. I took the girl for a ride on the Staten Island

ferry, and to a steak dinner at Broad’s. She was much too lovely and companionable a girl to be allowed to marry any rising young business man, so I talked her into marrying me. This was a rash proceeding on my part, and still more rash on hers, for my worldly prospects were dubious in the extreme. That, however, did not deter her. A courageous girl. Well, she had a good job, and perhaps felt able to afford the luxury of a bohemian husband. She proposed to support our *ménage* while I finished my novel, but I made other financial arrangements, laid off from my job for three months, and rewrote and finished that long-delayed book. It sold quite a lot of copies, and we bought a house in the country. And now here we are, with two tall sons not long out of uniform. Yet it seems only yesterday that I met that girl in Greenwich Village. As I wrote in a sonnet on our silver wedding anniversary —

The war was over — and upon the edge
Of doom the world could lie down and
forget;
The ruined rampart was a flowering hedge,
And life was sweet the year when first
we met.

IV

After the First World War, the up-townners discovered Greenwich Village. Then the United States discovered it. Greenwich Village became known throughout the world. The time had come when America had to have a bohemia of its own, and this was it. People wanted to live in bo-

hemia, every cellar and garret in the Village was rented, and up went the rents. Sightseeing buses came to the Village. Village restaurants provided Village atmosphere for their uptown customers, with some phony Villagers on exhibit.

Dignified ex-Villagers like me deplored this crass commercialization of the Village. In a magazine article I pronounced a funeral oration over the Village. For this I was bitterly reproached by a Village friend whose real-estate business was, he thought, threatened by my sinister utterances; and I was laughed at by other Village friends, who asked: "Dost think, because thou hast turned Puritan, there shall be no more cakes and ale?"

Far be it from me to say anything against cakes and ale. But what about rents? Bohemias must be based on low rents in a blighted residential area of a large city which is a cultural center; at least, the oldtime kind of bohemia was so based. There might be a bohemia of some kind in the nice new houses of a low-cost public housing project — but it would not be the same.

For one thing, in a public housing project there would be a lot of children around. Children are very nice to have around, I think; but not in a bohemia. They would interfere seriously with bohemian love affairs.

Maybe the new-fangled bohemias of our socialized future will be better than the old bourgeois private-enterprise bohemias — more sanitary, more orderly, equipped with all the mod-

ern improvements. But I think of it Christopher Street —

A Japanese print and a candlestick with
candles burning bright,

Curtain-folds of sunny gold at windows
left and right,

A couch with tattered tapestry, a cigarette-scarred table,

A view from either window of an alley
and a stable —

That was nice, too, in its oldtime way. Inconvenient, to be sure: outside toilet; baths in the kitchen sink; candlelight and kerosene lamps, wood for the little fireplace brought in a sack by Nick from around the corner. Ah well, we can't have everything.

The Greenwich Village of Theodore Dreiser, Eugene O'Neill and Edna St. Vincent Millay, of John Reed and John Sloan and Art Young, of George Cram Cook and Frank Shay, has now, it seems, receded into the mists of the past. It has become a part of American cultural history, and it has a ghostly existence, I hear, as a Tradition which the Villagers of today devoutly cherish. Golly! Well, we in our day had a Tradition, too. When we stood at the bar in the Working Girls' Home, we thought of John Masfield. In Carmine Street we thought of Edgar Allan Poe. And there were other Great Old Villagers of the past — but we were too busy living our own lives to think much about the past.

As for the future of Greenwich Village, I always expected it to be rebuilt as a modern residential quarter in which people would live in corn-

plete indifference to its bohemian past. "It will not matter to them in the least," I wrote,

if out of the dust and grime
Impossible beauty flamed and flowered,
once upon a time.

If a boy and a girl for a year and a day
laughed bravely at despair,
No one will know in Christopher Street,
and certainly none will care.

Well, why should they care? Those lovers of today and tomorrow, bohemian or bourgeois, ought to be much too deeply occupied with their own love affairs to be thinking about some old love affair back in the pre-atomic past. To all such lovers, present and future, I benevolently offer the good wishes expressed in my Christopher Street ballad —

And so may all dear lovers that are starved
for love's delight

Find rest and peace, and food and fire,
and a kind bed at night.

And low rents — may they find those, too. But when will they? And how can American literature flourish without low rents?

Young people still go to the Village, and, it is said, find it a romantic and enchanting place. It is picturesque; even the phoniness is picturesque, to them. What is there about Greenwich Village, anyway? What has it got that the home town hasn't got?

In Greenwich Village it is all right for people to be interested in the kinds of poetry and art and music that they like, and they can say out loud what they really think, even about foreign policy. And it seems to be a place where improbable and delightful things can happen — for which I firmly decline to take the consequences. It is their Greenwich Village, not mine, and their responsibility entirely.

PHRASE ORIGINS—22

SOWING DRAGON'S TEETH: *Cadmus, one of the heroes of Greek mythology, once slew a terrible dragon that was sacred to Mars. Minerva, whom Cadmus worshipped, advised him to sow the dragon's teeth in the earth. No sooner had he done this than spears and helmets began to rise from the ground, followed by a harvest of warriors. These soldiers began fighting among themselves, and all except five of them were killed. All of Cadmus' followers had been killed in the fight against the dragon, but the five remaining warriors helped him to build the city of Thebes. To sow the dragon's teeth means to sow the seeds of war.*

MORRIS ROSENBLUM

THE STATE OF GEORGIA

BY WENZELL BROWN

GEORGIA was conceived as a paradise. No state in the union started life with the pronouncements of such high ideals. British interests may have thought of the colony as a buffer against French and Spanish military might assembled to the south, but to General James Edward Oglethorpe, founder of Georgia, the new land was to be a Utopia unparalleled in history.

Oglethorpe's first demand upon assuming the governorship of the colony in 1733 was that it should be a land completely free of slavery. Beyond this he ruled that there should be no absolute ownership of land, that intoxicating beverages and lawyers should be barred from entrance and that each settler should be carefully screened for character, education and reasons for wishing to enter the new colony.

The men who first arrived in Georgia were a highly reputable lot: Scotch Highlanders who came to fight the Spaniards, Lutherans from Salzburg who sought to avoid religious persecution, Moravians, Swiss, Welsh

and Piedmontese, all carefully weeded out by the British trustees of Georgia before being permitted to sail to the new land. Although many British debtors were included among the colonists, they were "of reputable families and of liberal or at least easy education; some undone in law suits, some by accidents in commerce, and some by suretyship."

But violence interfered with the Utopian plans almost from the beginning. By 1739, the colony had already become embroiled in a bloody conflict with the Spanish which was known as the War of Jenkins' Ear. This was followed by the French and Indian Wars in 1754, the internecine strife between Tories and rebels during the Revolution, the War of 1812, the endless Indian fighting and the final catastrophe of the Civil War, wherein Georgia seceded from the Union in 1861 and was not re-admitted until 1870. The bitter struggles that took place on Georgian soil dealt harshly with the Georgian soul. The ideals which instigated the founding of the colony were forgotten in

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the stubborn, relentless fight to maintain life, and gentle idealism gave way to a fierce, resentful pride which is, even today, the foundation of Georgian character.

The spirit of rebellion also appeared early in Georgia's history. Five years after the founding of the colony, in 1738, 121 malcontents signed a petition demanding rum, slaves and the right to own land. In 1742 they attempted to go over Oglethorpe's head; they sent Tom Stephens to London to appear before Parliament and voice their complaints. Oglethorpe lashed back at the dissident members of his colony, saying: "The idle ones are indeed for slaves. If their petition is countenanced, the province is ruined." Parliament upheld Oglethorpe and forced Tom Stephens to kneel before the House to receive a reprimand. But the settlers were stubbornly insistent on the slavery issue. They found loopholes in the law which permitted them to "rent" or "borrow" slaves from the Carolinas, until gradually the restrictions against slaveholding were sloughed off. This determination to work slave labor has a contemporary sequel, for the "share-cropper" or "tenant farmer" system lends itself to virtual peonage.

Georgia's lopsided economy has brought constant suffering to the state. King Cotton reigned supreme, and while it created an extremely small wealthy aristocracy it impoverished the vast group of small land-owners and firmly entrenched the system of slavery on Georgian soil.

Not until Ellis Arnall's enlightened administration of Georgia, beginning in 1942, were serious efforts made to vanquish the spectre of a one-crop agriculture. Today Georgia's revenue from cattle exceeds that of cotton, while hundreds of thousands of acres previously planted in cotton are now employed in raising peanuts, pecans, peaches, sweet potatoes, watermelons and similar crops. But cotton not only corroded the soil on which it remained too long, it also embittered the spirit of those who clung to the belief that cotton would again be king.

II

The Civil War struck with ironic force at Georgia, for she alone among the Confederate States made a serious effort to avoid the conflict. The myth of Georgia's prewar wealth is carefully cultivated in Southern textbooks, but actually less than 10 per cent of Georgian whites were slave owners. The remaining 90 per cent worked in economic competition with slave labor and had little desire to perpetuate a system which made their own poverty inevitable. Some of the northern counties went so far as to secede from the state, and the flag of the United States government flew over the Court House of Union County throughout the war. But Georgia bore the brunt of Sherman's destructive march in 1864, and no other state suffered such heavy losses in men and in property.

The bitter days of the Reconstruc-

tion period still linger in Georgian minds. Georgians became clannish, suspicious of all outsiders, resentful and arrogantly proud. These characteristics developed into a form of paranoia which has much in common with the sense of persecution experienced by defeated peoples throughout the world. The South suffered real injustices, the most flagrant of which was the discriminatory railroad rates which halted the rise of industry. However, Georgia suffered far more from the demagogues in her midst, and became a prey to false fears and false hatreds. Political leaders found they could attain power by stimulating hate and directing it against the most convenient target — the Negro.

Perhaps the most fantastic demagogue to spring up on Georgian soil was Tom Watson. The Populist Party, of which Watson was the leading spirit, was originally an organization of farmers with idealistic aims, but it was soon perverted into an instrument of personal ambition. Georgia was still suffering from the after-effects of the Civil War when Watson came onto the scene in 1870, and he managed to keep the political affairs of the state in a turmoil for four decades by pitting white and colored against each other. He reached the peak of his popularity in the United States Presidential campaign of 1892, when, as Populist candidate, he carried five states and got 1,550,000 votes. Immediately thereafter, his power began to wane, until in 1915 he launched a vitriolic hate campaign

against the Jews. At this time, a Jewish merchant named Leo Frank had been accused of an atrocious sex crime. He was tried, convicted and sentenced to life, all on very slender evidence. Watson, using his two papers, *Tom Watson's Magazine* and the *Jeffersonian*, whipped up a blaze of hatred against "the Jewish aristocracy." Inflamed by Watson's rantings, a lynch mob of fifteen men broke into the Georgia State Prison, removed Frank and hanged him. Watson was again a power in Georgia, and though he died shortly afterwards, he left a disciple.

Eugene Talmadge learned his tactics from Watson. Talmadge was an educated man, normally soft-spoken, who was at ease at a cocktail party or dressed in a Tuxedo. But as a stump speaker, Talmadge used the dialect of the Georgia crackers. Much of his ranting was scarcely articulate. He had a habit of pulling a lock of hair down over his forehead and looping his thumbs in his red suspenders while he harangued the mob. In his early campaigns, Talmadge's attacks were launched primarily against big business interests, though at the same time Old Gene had the support of the textile industry, which was largely financed by capital from the North.

Georgia's county unit system places the preponderance of political power in the hands of the farmers. Georgia has 159 counties, each one of which is assigned a minimum of two unit votes in the gubernatorial elections. The eight largest counties are allotted six voting units each and the next

thirty are given four units, while the remaining 121 have two. Thus some of the small counties which have only a few hundred registered voters have one third of the political strength of Fulton County, where Atlanta is located, although there are more than 400,000 people in this area. The farmer's vote often carries a weight sixty times as great as that of the city dweller.

Talmadge played upon prejudices, rationalizing the fears and frustrations of the Georgians, and directing their resentment against the North, the Negro and the labor unions. Meanwhile, industry backed Talmadge solidly, for his fight on unions helped them to maintain a supply of cheap labor. Had it not been for Talmadge's excesses in attacking his personal enemies, he might have maintained power indefinitely. His "purge" of the University of Georgia faculty in 1941, with the resultant black-listing of the entire Georgia University system by the National Association of Colleges and Universities, paved the way for his downfall.

Powerful university groups, combined with youthful idealists and respectable business men, spearheaded a move to rid the state of Talmadge's rule. The man they chose to supplant Talmadge was a fighting young liberal in his mid-thirties, Ellis Arnall. Arnall's governorship was a period of reason, of rapid social development. It was also a period of war, when new industries brought hordes of outsiders into the state and opened up mani-

fold opportunities for the colored. Field hands and servants left the country areas where they often received less than five dollars a week and flooded into the cities. The Southerner, deprived of cheap colored labor for the first time, was highly indignant. Eugene Talmadge was quick to scent this new opportunity.

The campaign of 1946 was one of prejudice against reason. The Talmadge forces used every conceivable device to whip up racial tensions, while the Arnall forces pointed to their solid accomplishments. The popular vote was 313,389 for James Carmichael, Arnall's choice for his successor, to 297,245 for Talmadge. But notwithstanding this substantial majority for Carmichael, Talmadge won on the county unit system of balloting. Gene Talmadge died shortly before he was to assume office, and a strange fiasco took place in which his son, Herman Talmadge, seized the office of governor, while at the same time it was claimed by the newly elected Lieutenant-Governor, Melvin E. Thompson. Georgia's "two governors" became a national joke, and the ridiculous situation remained for nearly three months until the Georgia Supreme Court handed down a decision in favor of Thompson.

Today Georgia is the nerve center of the conflicting ideologies of the South. Both the liberal forces working for industrial reforms, better race relations and improved social conditions and the powerful reactionary groups fighting for "white suprem-

acy," the maintaining of power in the hands of a small minority and cheap, unorganized labor have their headquarters in Atlanta.

III

Two men have become the symbols of Georgia's conflicting elements. Ellis Arnall represents the progressive groups who seek to raise the economic standards of all Georgians, both white and colored, through labor legislation, a battle against discriminatory freight rates and a general overhauling of Georgia's social, political and financial structure. The mantle of the champion of White Supremacy, which slipped from Eugene Talmadge's shoulders at the time of his death, is now worn by his son, Herman. While neither Arnall nor Herman Talmadge holds political office at the moment, the ground is being prepared for an all-out, knock-down battle in the special election of a governor called for July 14, 1948. Presumably, the opposing candidates will be Herman Talmadge and Melvin E. Thompson. Thompson, while he is gaining the support of Arnall and the progressives, is not a marked liberal himself. He is a mild conservative who will avoid extremes of any type. He is a reasonable, kindly man who, at the same time, shares many of the prejudices of the traditional Southerner. Georgia can not expect much progress under a Thompson régime, but neither will there be pronounced retrogression.

Georgians are bitterly resentful of

the unfavorable publicity they have received in the Northern press. They deplore the scare headlines which resulted from the tactics employed by the Columbians and the Ku Klux Klan, the four-fold lynching in Monroe, and the massacre of eight convicts in Thalman who refused to enter snake-infested ditches without the protection of high boots. They point out, with some justice, that they sent two of the Columbian leaders to jail, withdrew the Klan's Charter, closed the state-operated convict camps after the Thalman affair and indicted the officers who were responsible for the atrocities there. Georgians have not put an end to lynching, but they rarely condone it openly and, even this is a big improvement over ten years ago, when Georgians accepted an occasional lynching as a necessity, casually explaining that "It had to be done to keep the Negro in his place."

Georgian speech is filled with high-flowered phrases which often appear in grotesque contrast to the reality of daily life. "Defending white Southern womanhood" may form the paltriest excuse for the vicious killing of a helpless colored man. "Protecting the fair name of the South" is a constant cover-up for political chicanery. "The American way" may mark oppressive labor practices, and "Communist" is the most common epithet hurled by Georgians against those with whom they disagree. Yet, despite this, a real vision of Georgia's future is taking shape in the minds of

many of her people, and courageous men and women are speaking out in open criticism of abuses in public life.

Two powerful factors serving to liberalize Georgian opinion are the newspapers and the church. Georgia has 129 recognized newspapers and, of their number, only 7 supported Eugene Talmadge in his last campaign for governor, while 112 came out in open opposition to the brand of "white supremacy" which he peddled. The two most powerful papers in Georgia are both liberal. The *Atlanta Constitution* which has wide influence throughout the South has always denounced Talmadge openly and bitterly. Ralph McGill, the *Constitution's* editor, has been active on the Southern Regional Council and has lectured and written widely against racial intolerance. The *Constitution* spear-headed attacks against the Negro-hating, Jew-baiting Columbians and demanded action against the Ku Klux Klan. Southern hate-mongers and demagogues frequently list McGill as enemy Number One, placing his influence above that of Ellis Arnall. Ex-Columbians who testified against their leaders in court announced that McGill's name topped the "purge list" of those to be killed when the Columbians took over Atlanta "by military force." McGill, however, has also been in the black books of many liberals lately because he failed to take a strong stand against Herman Talmadge's seizure of power. The apparent reason for this is McGill's distaste for Melvin E. Thomp-

son, whom he considers, at best, as only a slightly lesser evil than young Talmadge.

The *Atlanta Journal* has more local influence within Georgia. It is a highly integrated paper which launched an out-and-out attack against the Talmadges, both father and son. The *Journal's* policy has been one of fearless, outspoken criticism of mob violence, state and civic corruption, the Klan, the Columbians and the numerous other hate groups that have sprung up in Georgia. The *Journal's* young editor, Wright Bryan, keeps a wary eye open for subversive activities, and he has scotched more than one incipient movement of this type by revealing its true nature.

The church has tremendous influence and commands respectful attention throughout the South. Nowhere is this more true than in Georgia. Historically the church has sided with vested interests and retarded Georgia's development, but this is not true today. Church groups have taken the offensive in breaking up traditional attitudes toward race and have recognized the fact that they cannot teach a doctrine of brotherhood while practicing racial discriminations. Most Georgians are deeply religious and they will accept criticism from the pulpit meekly which, offered in any other medium, would send them into spasms of rage.

Organized labor has made only spotty head-way in Georgia. The AFL has unions in specialized trades such as pipe-fitters or boiler-makers,

but its attempt at wide organization was broken in 1935 when it sought to unionize the Callaway Mills in La Grange. Eugene Talmadge called out the state militia, rounded up the strikers and interned them behind barbed-wire barricades. Strikers were black-listed, and still cannot secure industrial jobs in the South. The CIO started its own Southward drive in February of 1946 but up to date it has met with only a few scattered successes. The resistance to labor unions is strong. Management has worked upon the fears and suspicions of the Georgian for outsiders, and has added to this the constant threat of dismissal and black-listing for union activities. The most potent deterrent, however, is the fear that unions will break down lines of racial segregation.

IV

Georgia's educational record has been extremely poor in the past, but in the last few years she has made many advances. Ellis Arnall restored the recognition to the university system which had been lost under Talmadge's administration, and he also brought academic freedom to the state. The state university system is elaborate, with twenty-two branches spreading over the state; this includes Negro colleges in Savannah, Albany and Fort Valley. The University of Georgia in Athens is the oldest state-supported university in the country; at present it is crammed with 7231 students. Besides the state colleges, Georgia has

many private universities such as Mercer, Emory and Oglethorpe. Georgia Wesleyan College in Macon, made world-famous because it was attended by the three Soong sisters (who are now Madame Sun-yat Sen, Madame H. H. Kung and Madame Chiang Kai-shek), boasts that it was the first chartered woman's college in the world. The Atlanta University system, which has spacious grounds on the outskirts of Atlanta, has become a nation-wide center for colored education. Here Morehouse College, Spelman College, Morris Brown College, Gammon Theological Seminary and Atlanta University share adjoining grounds.

During the last year, substantial raises in teachers' salaries have been made, and there has been an attempt to make more equitable adjustments between expenditures for white and colored students. The most recent financial statement issued by the Department of Education lists per capita expenditures for students at \$45.47 as compared to an average of \$103.49 throughout the country; nevertheless Georgia claims to spend more out of each dollar's revenue on education than any other state.

Georgia's other cultural facilities are notably lacking. There is no legitimate theatre in the state nor is there any symphony and only an occasional road-show reaches the larger cities. At present, the *Atlanta Journal* is putting on a drive for "a Symphony Orchestra and expanded museums and libraries." The smaller towns'

only public amusements are moving pictures and pool-rooms and in only a few of them are there libraries. Moving pictures, outside of Atlanta and Savannah, are usually Grade B mysteries or Westerns. Theatre managers complain that when better pictures are shown, attendance declines.

The better magazines are extremely difficult to buy in Georgia, even in Atlanta, although the magazine racks of every small town drugstore are loaded down with comics and true confession magazines. On the other hand, Atlanta purchased more than a half-million dollars' worth of books last year, a record of per capita expenditure unequalled by any city in the midwest. The book divisions of both Davison-Paxon's and Rich's Department stores provide weekly lectures by well-known authors, while the Georgian Book Shop on Forsyth Street has become famous for pushing substantial books through contests, artistic window displays and other types of special promotion. Georgia has produced many significant writers in recent years, including Margaret Mitchell, Carson McCullers, Barry Fleming, Edison Marshall, Calder Willingham, Medora Field, Don West, Frank Yerby and a host of others.

A report on Georgia would not be complete without mention of its great and varied physical beauty. The whole coast is dotted with "the Golden Isles of Georgia." The mountains in the west of the state, the high ridges of which are covered with a blue haze, provide a contrast.

Georgians like to state that they live in a land of paradoxes and that any portrait of Georgia that represented the state in clearcut lines would be patently false. Georgia is muddled, beset by confusion and constant change. There was a rapid industrial expansion and a substantial accumulation of wealth during the war, and this was accompanied by social and political reforms under the Arnall administration. During the last year, however, there has been a definite backsliding. The period of "the two governors" marked a truce between the opposing forces, but now Herman Talmadge's campaign for governor is in full swing. The Talmadge forces have one, and only one, issue — white supremacy. Incidents of lynching and violence against Negroes are markedly increasing and each incident is employed by the Talmadgeites for their own ends. On the other hand, resistance against discriminatory racial practices is also at its peak. Georgians are slowly being forced into one of the opposing camps, while most of them would undoubtedly prefer to take a stand somewhere in between.

The paradise pictured by Oglethorpe seems far from realization. Still, there are men and women in Georgia today who have much the same dream that Oglethorpe possessed, and they look forward to a future in which the pattern of Georgian life may be established on the three principles of the state shield — justice, wisdom and moderation.

THE FINE ART OF SMUGGLING

BY FREDERIC SONDERN, JR.

ABLE Seaman Caesar Negas walked calmly down the gangway of the S. S. *Saint Protez* as she lay at her berth in New York's East River, just in from Marseilles. He exchanged a few joking words with the Customs Guard as his dufflebag was examined, and then strode quickly toward the exit. Suddenly, with that peculiar sixth sense that Customs men acquire, the Guard felt that something was wrong. The man had been too elaborately casual during the search, too much in a hurry after it. "Just a minute, there," he snapped. Negas tried to run for it. But several burly men appeared from nowhere, and hustled him into a nearby enclosure. In four flat cotton bags fastened to the sailor's body they found eight pounds of pure heroin — worth \$58,000 on the underworld market. In the linen locker of the *Saint Protez*, one of the special Customs search teams — trained literally to take a ship apart from stem to stern — found another 28 pounds of the drug packed away in laundry bags, the biggest attempted shipment in years.

The United States Customs Service — a branch of the Treasury De-

partment — has two principal jobs. To protect American industries, it collects about half a billion dollars in revenue a year on imports from abroad. And, working hand in glove with the Narcotics Bureau of the Treasury, it helps to keep millions of dollars worth of dangerous drugs out of the country. The ancient battle between the revenueurs and the smugglers was interrupted by the war, which disrupted the sources and trade routes of diamonds, narcotics, Swiss watch movements and other smugglers' staples. But the battle is beginning again and promises to be one of the fiercest of all time.

In an unpretentious office in the Treasury Department in Washington, the sensitive threads of the Customs Service's world-wide intelligence network of agents and informers come together in the hands of a gray-haired, shrewd-eyed veteran revenueur — Edson J. Shamhart, chief of the Division of Investigation and Patrol. He is a soft-spoken, pleasant man who probably knows more about the ways of smugglers than anyone else in the world. "If there's a way to smuggle something . . . anything," one of his

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assistants said to me, "then the Chief knows what it is. He doesn't have to search for contraband. He smells it."

Shamhart's intricate spider-web has begun to hum. Word has come from Treasury agents abroad who maintain contact with informers in foreign underworld circles that big international narcotics rings, which buy opium and other raw materials in the Middle and Far East and refine them in their own plants, have begun operating again. There is not much of interest discussed in remote Montmartre cafés or Lisbon waterfront dives that doesn't ultimately reach Shamhart's desk. An informer whose tip on a smuggling attempt bears fruit, gets 25 per cent of the Treasury's take on dutiable goods and a substantial bonus for news of a shipment of narcotics. One jeweler, with good underworld contacts, twice earned a \$50,000 reward. All over Europe, millions of dollars worth of precious stones, some plundered by the Nazis, others used by refugees as currency, most of them now in the hands of the international underworld, are waiting to be shipped across the Atlantic to American markets where no questions will be asked. Fortunes in jewelry and other easily transportable valuables were taken from Europe to South America by wealthy fugitives, who are now trying to smuggle them into the United States.

The Treasury distinguishes sharply between the professional and the amateur smuggler who may overstep the modest smuggling of which almost

every traveler is guilty. The amateur is rarely dangerous and usually easy to catch. Mrs. Smith buys a \$20,000 necklace in Paris, and tries to avoid paying the 50 per cent duty. She is in trouble long before she reaches New York. A clerk in the store where she bought the necklace went to the American Consulate General and registered information of the purchase; that will net him a lot of money if Mrs. Smith attempts to smuggle. Or she tells some friend on the ship about her forthcoming venture in crime; a steward overhears it. When the ship arrives and Mrs. Smith goes ashore, her Customs Declaration is checked against a list of suspected would-be smugglers. If she has not declared her diamonds, the Customs Inspector assigned to her marks an inconspicuous little symbol on her declaration form, which means, "Thorough search — contraband suspected." He generally finds it without much trouble. Mrs. Smith loses the necklace, pays the duty on it anyway, and may be fined another \$20,000 besides. She rarely attempts it again.

II

Professionals are a different matter. "They think up new wrinkles every day," says Shamhart. "But we usually get them in the long run." In the Chief's office are files containing the compounded wisdom of smugglers and revenueurs over 150 years. Whenever a new smuggling trick is discovered, a detailed description of it is flashed to all the Customs field offices

and distributed to Inspectors and Agents. But some techniques have had long lives.

There was an entomologist who used to arrive at New York at regular intervals, back from trips to the tropics. "Old Buggy," as he came to be known, was obviously harmless. He was a spare, fussy little man — apparently a professor of national repute. The Customs men got into the habit of passing him and his baggage as quickly as possible. But one day, a Customs Agent — one of the specially-trained plainclothes men who do the Service's intelligence work — happened to meet an entomologist from New York who had never heard of his eccentric fellow scientist. The Agent investigated further and found that no one in that field of science knew the "Professor." The next time "Old Buggy's" name appeared on a ship's manifest, the inquisitive Agent met him. The "Professor" objected violently when his specimens were carefully dissected. There were eight \$6000 gems in their bodies.

A regular transatlantic traveler was a prosperous diamond merchant who brought in many thousands of dollars worth of jewels every year, properly declared and duty paid, from Amsterdam. Through their underground network, however, the Customs men discovered that every year he also disposed of several particularly fine stones on which he had not paid duty. After that, every time the man came into the United States, the Customs Inspectors went to work on him. They

took the handle off his shaving brush, the soles off his shoes; they went through the lining of his clothes, the inside of his hats, squeezed his toothpaste tubes dry, prodded the cotton in the tops of his medicine bottles, broke the pills apart. To no avail. The merchant would maintain an imperturbable calm through these indignities, and then send in a bill for damages. Finally, one of the Service's best Agents patiently and thoroughly investigated the merchant, his background, his friends, his business. There was not a single lead. But there was something about the man's appearance that kept bothering him. One day, as he happened to look into the window of an optical firm, he suddenly realized what it was. The next time the diamond merchant landed from Amsterdam, the Agent — with a doctor — was on the pier to meet him. He kicked up quite a fuss when they made him take out his glass eye. Carefully cemented inside was a large jewel.

Some years ago, an Inspector in Boston noticed an apparently much-distressed young man who had just arrived on a ship from France with a casket containing the body of his sister. Suddenly the Inspector stiffened. The young man was the same that he had noticed in New York some months before, equally bereaved over a brother. After a hurried consultation among the port's Customs officials, the casket was impounded. It contained a body, all right, but it was wrapped in many yards of highly

dutiable lace and other fine fabrics which were festooned with some \$40,000 worth of jewelry. The transatlantic mourner, as subsequent investigation revealed, had operated without detection for several years. He bought his bodies from potter's field ghouls in Paris, brought them over under forged papers, and then disposed of them through an obliging undertaker.

III

Among the hundreds of exhibits in the Black Museum of the New York Custom House, where fledgling Inspectors study the apparatus designed by smugglers, is a stuffed cat. It had belonged to a woman who always arrived from Europe with much baggage, considerable fuss and various animals. On one occasion she had a cat in a basket on her arm. The Inspector reached to stroke it. The woman recoiled violently, but not before the Inspector had felt that it was a very peculiar cat. It was stuffed, and in the stuffing was some \$25,000 worth of cocaine.

The most common smugglers' devices include hollow statues, billiard cues, canes and golf clubs, hollow books and crutches, fake pens and pencils, and the standard "belly bands" — belts and holsters of canvas which strap to the body. The more unusual range from fake hunchbacks' humps to false teeth made to hold gems.

Acting Commissioner of Customs, Frank Dow, a veteran like Shamhart,

believes in making his men learn by experience. A new Inspector, after some elementary training, is attached to a veteran for many months of apprenticeship. "We teach them to notice everything, to be suspicious of everybody," an elderly revenueur told me, "without letting people know it. You can't learn that out of books. You have to have a bent for it."

A watchful Inspector was disturbed when he saw an obviously cultivated and expensively dressed woman — a transatlantic plane passenger — take a wad of chewing gum out of her mouth and stick it to a post while her baggage was being examined. Most air travelers chew gum to relieve the pressure on the ears when landing, but the lady did not seem the gum-chewing type, pressure or no pressure. When she retrieved the gum from the post, however, and put it back in her mouth — after the inspection was completed — the Inspector moved fast. At his demand, she reluctantly took out the wad and handed it over. Inside was a large ruby.

Teamed with the Inspectors are the Customs Service's Appraisers who are specialists in the value of dutiable merchandise. A British smuggling ring did very nicely for a while by faking antique furniture, passing it off as over 100 years old — which exempted it from duty — and selling it at a tremendous profit in the American market. The game worked until an Appraiser noticed that a woodworker's joint was used in its construction which did not exist 100 years ago.

From the experienced Inspectors and Appraisers, Shamhart hand-picks the small élite corps known as the "Customs Agency Service" and its Special Agents. "They have to have eyes in the backs of their heads," says the Chief, "and know every trick in the business." Most of the Customs Agents are quiet, unobtrusive older men who have a reputation in the underworld for the calm, unhurried efficiency with which they track down the smuggler. A small corps of only 160, they are widely traveled, can pretend to be almost anybody or anything, and operate entirely without publicity. I knew one of them who worked in Europe before the war. He was a nondescript looking but convivial man — apparently a salesman. I knew him well for several years before I had the slightest inkling that he was a Treasury man. And then I found out only because he wanted some information and considered me reliable. He knew an amazing assortment of people — from bank presidents to gangsters — all the way from London to Istanbul, and he was equally at home in every capital in Europe. Customs Agents are good at that. They make friends with ship captains, pursers and stewards, they cultivate the proprietors of the waterfront dives in which smuggling operations are likely to be discussed. "The boys get around," says Shamhart. "They have to."

Some years ago, the watch business in the United States faced a serious crisis. The market was suddenly

flooded with Swiss watch movements which were selling far below the usual price of both imported and American watches. It became obvious that a smuggling operation of gigantic proportions was under way.

This was not too difficult a case to crack. Paul Rabkin, a New York importer with connections in Switzerland, had bribed two Customs employees, who inspected his wares, not to look too closely at the earthenware and bronze statues which he imported. These statues were hollow, and within a year Rabkin had smuggled almost a million dollars worth of watch movements into the country. Within a few weeks one agent found the source of supply in Switzerland, another traced the shipments across Europe to people in Belgium who packed the "statues," and the bribed Customs men were secretly watched in New York. Rabkin and his accomplices were nabbed in one swoop.

During his two years in the Atlanta Penitentiary, Paul Rabkin worked out a new system. What he did not know was that the Customs Service believes that big-time smugglers are usually incorrigible. From jail Rabkin wrote instructions in code to his son, August, to make the necessary contacts in Europe and get ready for a big deal. Chief Shamhart in Washington, however, was reading his mail and had cracked the code. When Rabkin came out of the penitentiary and set up a new office in New York, he had Customs Agents shadowing him from the first day on. August Rabkin, in Eu-

rope, had arranged for the shipment of 20,000 Swiss watch movements a month. That would have disrupted the American watch business entirely. Rabkin senior was all set to receive and distribute them.

When the first batch of movements left the Swiss factory, Customs Agents were right behind it. They followed it through France and Belgium and finally onto the ship that brought it to the United States. The movements were packed in tiny containers which were scattered around in cases of stationery. A truck manned by Customs Agents in the guise of driver and helper delivered the stationery to its consignee, and in short order Paul Rabkin found himself back in prison, this time for 14 years. When his son, unaware of what had happened, stepped off a ship in New York, he too was greeted by Customs Agents. He was sentenced to seven years.

IV

The Treasury's network for economic information abroad, headed by the Treasury Attaché in our Embassy or Legation in certain foreign capitals, is so sensitive to export and import fluctuations, that Shamhart's office usually knows about big smuggling operations before they can do much harm.

One Treasury Attaché noticed, for example, that a certain type of jewelry made in Czechoslovakia was being imported into Belgium in far greater quantity than the Belgian market could possibly justify. He suspected

that the baubles were being transhipped to the United States. But there was no record of their entry into this country. A notification went to the Customs Service, and Shamhart's men went to work. Within a few months the case was complete. The smuggling ring had made arrangements with a firm in Belgium which packed the jewelry in rabbit skins which were exported to the United States. One day, several dozen bales of rabbit skins were delivered in New York by truckmen who had badges and guns under their overalls. The consignees unsuspectingly signed for them and were promptly arrested.

Rabkin and his son and the rabbit skin smugglers came quietly enough. But on the U. S. borders, smugglers have been growing more violent. A few months ago, one of the Treasury's informants in Mexico sent word that a local smuggling gang had collected a large cache of opium which they planned to get into the United States. In dealing with narcotics, the Treasury rightly bars no holds. The Narcotics Bureau dispatched one of its undercover men to cooperate with the Customs men and to make contact with the gang. He circulated around the cafés in which the smugglers do their business and finally found the man he wanted. The agent, pretending to be a narcotics peddler himself, agreed to buy the whole opium hoard if the smugglers would bring it into the United States. The deal was made, and Narcotics got together with the Customs Border Pa-

trol Service, a carefully selected, tough outfit which patrols the Mexican border, to spring the trap.

The neighborhood where the dope was to be delivered, on the American side, is flat and barren. The Customs and Narcotics men could not concentrate a force of any size without its being seen. They decided to crowd as many as possible into the car which was to meet the Mexicans. Two Customs men and a narcotics man were under a rug in the back of the car, one officer was crammed into the trunk compartment. On the front seat was the Narcotics operative.

The Mexicans arrived on time at the designated spot. With a heartfelt sigh, the Narcotics man got out of the car and walked slowly toward the five swarthy, heavily armed men. One wrong move on anybody's part and he would be caught in the crossfire of ten guns. He told them that the

money he had brought with him was in the car and they began carrying the heavy sacks of opium to the automobile. Suddenly the trunk compartment flew open and the Customs men in the tonneau threw off their rug. But the Mexicans did not throw up their hands. Their guns started to blaze as they retreated to cover. Then the officers had another disagreeable surprise. Across the river, a machine gun and a squad of snipers — which the smugglers had posted to cover them in case of emergency — opened up. For three hours, the battle raged as reinforcements arrived on both sides. The final score was three dead Mexicans and no casualties for the American side.

Edson Shamhart's sentiment about the Customs Service is shared by most of his subordinates. "I've been with the Service for 25 years," he says. "And I've rarely had a dull moment."

TO THE NATURAL WORLD

BY SISTER M. BERNETTA QUINN, O.S.F.

Fall on my grief like snowflakes, feathers, leaves.
Bury my sorrow as the rose inters
Dry grass beneath its petals. Scatter sand
Above this pain till it no longer stirs.

Let floods pour in upon the desolate plain.
Bid darkness come to cool these burning eyes.
Bury my loneliness in shifting dust,
Let drumming raindrops muffle all my sighs.

REPORT ON RUSSIAN IMPERIALISM

BY NEAL STANFORD

OVER the course of the past years, while the Soviet Union has been hurling accusations of imperialism against the United States with increasing vehemence, the U. S. State Department has been quietly collecting the facts about Russian expansion. If Moscow really wants to debate the issue of expansionism, Washington is now only too ready to trade facts with the Politburo.

The ammunition the United States can use in this battle of the record appears in an intelligence report drawn up by the research specialists of the State Department, called *The Extent of Russian Expansion in Less Than 100 Years*.

The report is a scholarly, factual review of Tsarist expansion since 1853 and of Soviet expansion since 1917. Even the briefest study of its figures and dates discloses that the Communists have adopted the technique of hurling epithets at others which more correctly characterize themselves. The only conclusion possible from this study is that Soviet Russia is actually the world's ranking present-day imperialist, its leading

expansionist, and undisputed unilateral acquirer of other people's lands.

The opening paragraph of the report comments: "In the light of Soviet charges of United States territorial expansion, it is interesting to examine the extent of Russian expansion in less than a century."

From that point on the study fires facts and figures into the record in a methodical fashion that is doubly devastating because of the absence of abusive rhetoric. Whether the Kremlin wants to argue the charge of expansionism as it relates to the Tsarist régime that preceded the revolution or confine it to present Soviet rule is immaterial to the State Department's experts. They have the record of both.

Following is Washington's brief account of just how much Russia did expand, and when, over the last century:

TSARIST EXPANSION

"Between 1853 and 1914 the Russian Empire acquired a total of 953,400 square miles.

NEAL STANFORD is State Department correspondent and foreign affairs specialist of the Washington bureau of the Christian Science Monitor. His last contribution to THE AMERICAN MERCURY was "The Secret Stalin-Hitler Plans," which appeared in the September issue.

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"The Crimean War (1853-1856) put a stop to expansion in Europe and even caused the temporary loss of Bessarabia between 1856 and 1878.

"In Central Asia and the Far East, however, Russian expansion reached its peak during this period.

"In Central Asia, Turkestan (650,000 square miles) was conquered between 1867 and 1891 from local régimes, with some minor cessions from Persia and Afghanistan.

"Meanwhile exploration and settlement of the Pacific coast resulted in the annexation of 266,600 square miles.

"North Sakhalin was incorporated in 1857.

"Between 1858 and 1860 China signed treaties recognizing Russian possession of areas north of the Amur and along the Pacific Ocean in what is known today as the Primorski (Maritime) Krai.

"South Sakhalin (1875) and Port Arthur (1898) were both acquired during this period but were lost again in 1905 when they were yielded to Japan by the Treaty of Portsmouth.

"In addition to the major annexations in the above areas, the Russian Empire consolidated its hold on the Caucasus by the incorporation of Circassia in 1864, and the cession of Kars and Batum by Turkey in the Treaty of San Stefano (1878). These acquisitions (22,200 square miles) completed the conquest of the Caucasus which had begun in the early 1800s.

"Finally, exploration of the Arctic resulted in the formal annexation of the island of Severnaya Zemlya (14,600 square miles) in 1913.

"The area of Russia had been roughly 7,691,600 square miles in 1853. On the eve of the World War, following annexations, the Russian Empire comprised 8,645,000 square miles."

The story these figures tell is of a country pushing out its borders faster and farther than any other power in the world during that period. Tsarist Russia, from 1853 to 1914, acquired land almost equal to the total area of Western Europe; of Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Switzerland, the Low Countries, Germany and the United Kingdom combined.

That exhibition of imperialism is on the record and cannot be washed away by all the hysterical verbiage the Kremlin is now directing against the United States.

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Following the description of the jerry-built empire of the Russian Tsars, the American study describes the consequences of the revolution. It states:

"The territorial domain of Russia diminished by 469,300 square miles.

"Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania declared their independence.

"Kars was ceded to Turkey.

"Bessarabia returned to Rumania.

"A large area was lost to the newly-created Poland.

"Postwar Soviet Russia had an area of 8,175,700 square miles.

"The only extension of territory before 1939 was the formal annexation (announced in 1926) of all islands in the Arctic which fall within the triangle described by the lines of longitude 32-degrees-4-minutes-31-seconds east and 168-degrees-49-minutes-31-seconds west, the north pole forming the apex and the northern coast of Russia, the base of the triangle. Figures for the area have not been issued by the USSR.

"Except for this addition, the borders of Soviet Russia remained static until 1939."

The changes that occurred in Russian territory as a result of the 1917 Revolution, the record shows, were all at one time or another accepted by the Kremlin. Russia entered the year 1939 having publicly resigned itself to its existing boundaries.

SOVIET EXPANSION

However, as the American study and the record shows, "since 1939 the USSR has expanded vigorously."

Against the Kremlin's charges of present-day American expansionism, never, incidentally, spelled out in terms of square miles, the United States can list the following acquisitions of the Soviet régime:

"A total of 280,600 square miles has been brought under *direct* [italics are the author's] Soviet control: 280,200 square miles have been added to Soviet territory, and 400 square miles are leased or jointly occupied.

"Territories which were formerly part of the Russian Empire, and comprising 196,400 square miles in all, have been regained.

"These include Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bessarabia and South Sakhalin, as well as large parts of prewar Poland and Finland.

"In addition, the Königsberg area, the Transcarpathian Ukraine, Tannu Tuva and the Kuriles (totaling 89,900 square miles) have been brought within Russian boundaries for the first time.

"Not officially part of the USSR, but temporarily under Soviet control are Porkkala Udd in Finland and Port Arthur in Manchuria, roughly equaling 400 square miles."

This example of expansionism since 1939 cannot be equalled or even approached by any other country. Of these eight years of Soviet imperialism, American officials have this to say:

"Only part of these recent additions have been internationally recognized.

"The new areas have been acquired in a variety of ways and the validity of Soviet claim to them varies in degree.

"Annexation of the areas from Finland and Poland and of the Transcarpathian Ukraine from Czechoslovakia, a total of 95,400 square miles, has already been recognized in treaties with the countries involved.

"A 50-year lease of Porkkala Udd is provided for in the Treaty of Peace with Finland.

"The USSR has not acquired sovereignty over Port Arthur, but has an agreement with China providing for joint maintenance of a military base in that area for 30 years.

"Soviet possession of the remaining 184,900 square miles still awaits international recognition and confirmation in the forthcoming treaties with Germany and Japan.

"Provisional occupation of the Königsberg area was arranged in the Potsdam agreement and of South Sakhalin and the Kuriles in the Yalta agreement.

"Permanent title to these areas, totaling 24,400 square miles depends directly upon the peace treaties.

"The acquisitions of the Baltic states, Bessarabia, and Tannu Tuva, totaling 160,500 square miles, are the result of unilateral actions, *covered in the case of the first two by prior agreements with Nazi Germany alone.* [Italics are the author's.]

"The annexation of Tannu Tuva was evidently accomplished by peaceful means and followed a vote in the Tuvian council for incorporation.

"None of those annexations has as yet been recognized by the United States, although only the legality of Soviet incorporation of the Baltic states has so far been questioned."

II

This factual review of Soviet Russia's expansion constitutes the United States government's rebuttal to the Kremlin's charges of American twentieth-century imperialism.

Incidentally, the record the State Department keeps of every Soviet territorial acquisition fully justifies former Undersecretary of State Dean Acheson's description of Soviet policy last spring before a congressional committee as "aggressive and expanding." The Soviet Embassy in Washington protested at the time, but calmed down quickly when Department officials pulled out the record.

That record lists fifteen separate specific instances of territorial expansion by Soviet Russia since 1939 — an average of one every six months. How the USSR acquired much of this territory makes particularly "interesting" reading, to purloin a State Department phrase, in the light of the Kremlin's protestations of peaceful intentions and friendly affection for its neighbors.

The State Department primer on Soviet expansion mentions only in passing that the Kremlin acquired the Baltic states and Bessarabia "by prior agreements with Nazi Germany alone." When the full intrigue that went on between Hitler and Stalin in the fall of 1939 comes to light,¹ as it will when the United States publishes the secret protocols of the Russo-German pact, these facts will appear:

That Russia won a free hand in the Baltics in return for assurances it would not oppose the Nazis, who were ready to pounce on Poland.

That Russia was promised Bessarabia on Stalin's personal insistence.

¹ See this writer's article, "The Secret Stalin-Hitler Plans," in the September 1947 AMERICAN MERCURY.

The incorporation of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia into the Soviet Union in August 1940 was the direct result of a deal with the Nazis. Their disappearance as independent states has never been officially accepted by the United States. Former Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles' blistering denunciation at that time of the USSR's action in swallowing up its three western neighbors still stands as Washington's policy toward the Soviet action:

During these past few days the devious processes whereunder the political independence and territorial integrity of the three small Baltic republics — Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania — were to be deliberately annihilated by one of their more powerful neighbors, have been rapidly drawing to their conclusion. . . . The policy of this government is universally known. The people of the United States are opposed to predatory activities no matter whether they are carried on by the use of force or by the threat of force. They are likewise opposed to any form of intervention on the part of one state, however powerful, in the domestic concerns of any other sovereign state, however weak.

As for Tannu Tuva, the State Department's account of how Moscow quietly incorporated that 75,000-square-mile wilderness in central Asia into the Soviet Union stands as a model of sub-rosa expansion.

By Moscow's own accounts Tannu Tuva in the thirties and early forties was a sovereign independent state. Then, in the fall of 1945, officials in the American embassy in Moscow were startled to discover in the

Soviet election lists for that year some reference to Tannu Tuvian districts. The Kremlin would neither acknowledge nor explain how Tannu Tuva suddenly happened to be within the Soviet borders.

A year later, however, in the fall of 1946, Moscow lifted the lid of secrecy with great fanfare and public celebrations, recounting how two years earlier the Tannu Tuvians had voluntarily decided to enter the Soviet Union and had been welcomed with open arms.

Thus the acquisition of this mid-Asiatic country was kept secret a full two years, and only guessed at after twelve months by keen-eyed members of the American mission in Moscow. Many geographers and newspaper cartographers, still unaware of this particular Soviet acquisition, continue to picture Tannu Tuva as free and independent.

Details of the Politburo's action towards East Prussia in the west and the Kuriles and South Sakhalin in the east are equally illuminating as regards Soviet expansionist techniques and policies.

These areas were awarded the USSR at Yalta and Potsdam, but with the provision that Soviet possession was to await confirmation in peace treaties with Germany and Japan.

To Moscow that provision has been just so much irrelevant verbiage. The Kremlin, immediately after their occupation, incorporated those territories into the USSR without waiting

for peace treaty approval. Soviet election lists today show them as integral parts of Soviet Russia.

Moscow's decision on what to do with the half of East Prussia it acquired at Potsdam provides a revealing example of the disregard, if not ruthlessness, which Stalin now and then exhibits towards the presumably free and independent republics of the USSR.

Geographically, it would have been natural for the northern part of East Prussia to have been merged with the Soviet Republic of Lithuania (which it adjoins), or else made into a seventeenth Soviet Republic. Instead, the omnipotent Politburo made it an integral part of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, with which it does not even have a common boundary. A comparable situation would exist if, by some legerdemain, British Columbia were to become a part of the United States and be arbitrarily incorporated into the state of New York by the powers that be in Washington.

The same political caprice appears in the Kremlin's handling of the strategic Crimean peninsula. It also is an integral part of the RSFSR, despite the fact it borders on other Soviet Republics. Logic and geography go by the boards when the Politburo starts drawing the boundaries of the various Soviet Republics. There is also no logic in the Soviet government's contention that its sixteen republics are independent and equal, for while two of them have repre-

sentation in the United Nations, the largest and most powerful, the RSFSR, lacks direct representation.

American officials in the Embassy in Moscow report a constant, even if generally unimportant, shifting of the Soviet Union's internal political boundaries under orders from Moscow. This is particularly true in the vast Siberian areas which are rapidly being industrialized and which for political, economic or strategic reasons may suddenly find their political status changed overnight by a Moscow ukase.

The best example of this arbitrary action by Moscow was the sudden disappearance during the war of three constituent Soviet republics, the inhabitants of which were secretly and forcibly transferred to Siberia for security reasons. The facts in the case did not leak out of Russia until after the war.

The State Department résumé of Soviet Russia's expansion over the last eight years confines itself to what it terms areas brought under "direct" Soviet control. In other words, the United States is not publicly charging up as imperialism the "indirect" expansion of Soviet power ever since V-J day. Were that indirect expansion of Soviet authority to be included in United States estimates, figures on Soviet imperialism would have to include everything east of the iron curtain — Rumania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania, Hungary and Poland.

Those are the countries with Communist-controlled governments, whose

chiefs are for the most part avowed spokesmen for the Kremlin. They account for another 426,000 square miles of territory. Added to the "direct" Soviet acquisition since 1939 of 280,600 square miles, they make a grand total on Soviet expansion of over 700,000 square miles. That is unquestionably the major and most impressive fruit of victory gathered by the Soviet Union, or by any other allied power for that matter.

These figures constitute the real rebuttal to Moscow's increasingly malicious and exaggerated charges against the United States of imperialism. They turn the accusations back upon the accusers, and cite chapter and verse. And they reveal the slavish Soviet adaptation of a major Nazi propaganda technique: repeat a lie often enough and loud enough and people will eventually come to believe it.

PERSPECTIVE

BY ETHEL ROMIG FULLER

One who is cutting alfalfa
On a field over-hanging the sea,
Stops work to gaze at a freighter,
Horizon-rimmed, enviously,
And thinks, "If I weren't a born farmer,
It's aboard her I'd sure enough be."

Binoculars focused on shore line,
One who's braced at the ship's rusty bow,
Glimpses mower and meadow,
And lustily sighs, "I allow,
Weren't the sea in my blood, I'd be haying
Alongside that fellow right now."

THE SKEPTICS' CORNER

by BERGEN EVANS



*That most children are born in
the early hours of the morning*

Doctors and laymen alike are so impressed by the discomforts attendant upon deliveries in the early hours of the morning that they have come to think that most babies diabolically select that time for their first appearance on this great stage of fools. Until quite recently medical textbooks stated it as a fact.

Studies, however, particularly those of Maximilian Meyer, who analyzed over 130,000 births occurring over a period of twenty-two years, show that births are pretty evenly distributed throughout the 24 hours.

*That there can be no conviction
of murder without a body*

There is a widely held belief that there can be no conviction of murder without a body's being produced. Many murderers seem to share it. Thus a Mr. Clark of California, after burning the body of a Mr. Schick, also of that state, in an oil drum be-

hind his house, complacently told the police, "You can't convict me without a body."

But his assurance was unjustified. Many men (including Mr. Clark) have been so convicted. Courts do not always abide as strictly by the letter as laymen sometimes think. Thus in the case of *Commonwealth* [of Pennsylvania] v. *Lettrich* the defendant was convicted of the murder of her sister's eight-day-old illegitimate child although the baby's corpse was never found. The court reasoned, not illogically, that since it had been established that the child had last been seen with its aunt, and since it could not of its own volition go anywhere, and since it was now missing, there was a strong inference that her statement that she had put it in the furnace was correct.

Those who contemplate committing the perfect crime and are relying on a complete disposition of the body as an element in its perfection are advised to read Mr. Haydn Hilling's "The Case of Decasto Earl Mayer" in the *Washington Law Review* for

May 1947, before they proceed. It may exercise a salutary restraint upon a dangerous confidence. Mayer, with the assistance of his mother, Mary Ellen Smith, murdered James Bassett in order to procure his automobile. There were no witnesses of the act, other than the principals, and the body was never found. Mayer was apprehended and there is little doubt that he would have been officially hanged had he not anticipated the law by attending to the business unofficially himself. The trial court in a special memorandum stated that "the *corpus delicti* in a homicide case can be established by . . . circumstantial evidence."

The common error may in part be due to a confusion of the *corpus* of the essential *corpus delicti* with corpse. But the *corpus delicti* is the body of the crime, not the body of the victim, and its "establishment" simply means that it must be shown that a crime has been committed. Thus the spontaneous combustion of a newly insured house amid a pervasive aroma of kerosene is, at least to the average insurance adjuster, the *corpus delicti* of arson.

Of course it is easier to establish that a man has been murdered if his body, bearing marks of violence that could not have been self-inflicted, can be produced. But it is not essential. A strict interpretation of the rule, as Judge Story observed, "would amount to a universal condonation of all murders committed on the high seas." And as the conditions of

modern life make it easier and easier to dispose of a body the rule will probably be more and more relaxed and inferences more frequently relied on.

*That there's a lot of misbehavior
in the confessional*

A good many anti-Catholic bigots who have, apparently, never seen the inside of a Catholic church and seem to be under the impression that the confessional is some sort of booth where confessor and penitent are screened in delicious intimacy, gratify their salaciousness and bigotry simultaneously by recounting exciting stories of misbehavior between priests and fair penitents.

Anyone who has ever seen a confessional knows that there are few places on earth less suited to philandering. The accusation, as the *Nation* points out, is as ignorant and preposterous as Monsignor Fulton Sheen's charge that transference in psychoanalysis "is only used when the patient is a young and very beautiful woman."

*That the sirloin is so called be-
cause King Henry VIII once
facetiously knighted a roast*

The exquisite and, alas, in these days all too rare pleasure one obtains from a good sirloin of beef is certain to be lessened by having to listen to some musty oracle explain that a sirloin is so called because Henry VIII (some, as a variant, make it Charles

II) once in a merry mood drew his sword and knighted a roast loin of beef, saying "Arise, Sir Loin, I dub thee knight."

It has now been over two hundred years since Swift classified this corny whimsy as a hackneyed error, but it still spreads its miasma over dinner tables and blights the good mirth.

The word actually derives from the French *sur*, over, plus *longe*, from the Latin *lumbus*, side, since it is the upper part of the loin.

*That the Ten Commandments
are the basis of all Law*

One frequently hears from those who are more devout than informed that the Ten Commandments form the basis of all human law. If one asks which version of the Ten Commandments is referred to, one is generally met with a blank stare, for only a very few of those who "believe" in the Commandments are aware that there are two versions (*Exodus* 20 and 34) which the most ingenious of commentators have not yet been able to reconcile. As a matter of fact the very phrase "the Ten Commandments" presents difficulties, since the passage in *Exodus* 20 that comprises what is generally called the Ten Commandments contains fourteen verbs of injunction and restraint. Catholics and Protestants divide them differently, yet both manage to make them come out ten. And if frequency of repetition may be accepted as a criterion of importance, the most

important of all the Commandments in the Old Testament (next to the insistence on Jehovah's supremacy over all other gods) is one of which it is safe to say not one lay Christian in a hundred has ever heard: namely, *Thou shalt not see the a kid in his mother's milk*. Orthodox Jews take this injunction most seriously, even to having two sets of dishes — one for the kid and one for the milk, but the average Christian, until the Bible is forcibly laid open before him, simply denies that any such injunction is any part of the Commandments.

Accepting the version in *Exodus* 20, however, and further accepting them as ten, only four of the Commandments have even analogues in our law — those prohibiting theft, murder, adultery and perjury. Some state laws and local ordinances compel a partial observance of the third and fifth Commandments, though there is considerable disagreement as to whether Sunday is the Sabbath and whether being compelled to assist indigent parents constitutes "honoring" them. As for the Tenth Commandment — the whole of our economic structure, judging from the noble science of advertising which claims to support it, seems to rest upon the *stimulation* of covetousness. And let any man so much as suggest publicly that it might be a good thing to pool our possessions and so eliminate this hysterical longing and he will be denounced as an atheistic rabble-rouser.

There is no doubt, however, that

the strange accident which led to the dissemination of the Jewish Scriptures throughout the Western world has had a considerable effect on the form and philosophy of our laws, though their content is mostly derived from Roman law, experience, and the theorizing of French atheists. The referring of all prohibitions "indiscriminately to the sanction of divine authority" was, as Briffault says, a peculiar trait of the Jews that has had a widespread effect on the development of various codes. It is from the form of the Decalogue, Max Radin believes, "that the idea has been firmly fixed in men's minds that by an act of sovereign authority a brief series of commands could be given and that an adequate law could be arrived at in that way."

That flying fish fly

The belief that flying fish fly, that is, impel themselves through the air by agitating their fins as birds do their wings, is an example of the most excusable sort of popular error. For the fact that it does not fly at all, but merely propels itself in prolonged leaps, in glides sustained by its pectoral fins, could not have been determined until modern photography made an exact study possible.

It is interesting that the marine Exocoetidae, being alien to common experience and having played very little part in literature, have not been used to support some moral belief or to demonstrate this or that theory of the

universe. Had they so been, their flying would have become an article of faith and all attempts to elucidate the true nature of their movements resisted with obduracy and ridicule.

That cows give milk "naturally"

That is to say "unnaturally." Many city dwellers and even a gentleman farmer or two are mildly astonished to learn that cows give milk primarily for calves and not for customers. A cow will not give milk until she has borne a calf and she must continually be re-impregnated ("freshened," the dairy men call it) and bear fresh calves if she is to continue giving milk.

Were we not accustomed to it, we might well regard the drinking of milk as an obscene act. If we drank only simple, wholesome beer, let us say, and if some traveler reported finding a nation of "savages" who by selective breeding had produced a monstrous hypertrophy of the mammary glands of one of the ungulates and who repeatedly bred this animal to stimulate her lactation and deprived her of her young that they might guzzle her milk, we would no doubt recoil in horror and thank God (Who might decline the responsibility) that we were civilized.

Footnote: With a rather commendable moral latitude most cattlemen consider a cow a heifer until she has borne her second calf.

FACTS AND LEGENDS ABOUT EYES

BY LOUIS H. SCHWARTZ, M.D.

THERE was at one time a superstition to the effect that bathing the eyes with the first snow that fell in March would keep them healthy. Going back further in the history of medicine, we find that urine was advocated as an efficient eyewash. (In primitive medicine excreta formed an important ingredient in many cures.) Nowadays, thousands of people make it a practice to wash the eyes every morning or evening with some popularly-advertised lotion, in the belief that this can prevent infections and preserve good vision. Actually, healthy eyes need nothing of the sort. The best eyewash is the natural one — tears.

Raw Carrots. There is a vast amount of confusion as to the rôle played by raw carrots in improving eyesight. Shortly before the war, in the course of some research on night blindness and glare blindness, it was found that persons who are deficient in Vitamin A have difficulty in adapting themselves to sudden changes from light to darkness, and vice versa. In order

to eliminate this deficiency raw carrots were often used, because they are rich in Vitamin A, inexpensive, easily digested and readily available. In many instances cures were effected. During the war the RAF began to feed raw carrots to its fliers, and a widespread notion developed that raw carrots would help anyone with poor eyesight. It should be emphasized that the only people who will be helped by raw carrots are those whose vision has been impaired because of a Vitamin A deficiency — and even here the cure cannot be guaranteed to work. Incidentally, it should be noted that any other food which is high in Vitamin A — butter, for example, or a colored vegetable — will do just as well.

Rubbers and Eyesight. One of the silliest, and most inexplicable, notions about eyes is the widespread myth that wearing rubber overshoes and boots — especially wearing them indoors — is bad for the eyes. If there were any truth to this view, then firemen, workers in dye factories, car

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washers and others whose occupations require them to wear rubber boots constantly ought to have poor eyesight. The fact is that they haven't; and there is no other evidence to support this myth.

Rings Around the Eyes. The popular belief that rings around the eyes is a sign of dissipation is unfair to many men and women who lead clean lives. It is true that some people who keep late hours and indulge too freely in food and drink may develop dark rings around their eyes, but these rings may have other origins. Many women get them as the result of menstrual disorders or anemia.

Color Blindness and Vision. Color-blind people usually have excellent vision, even when the color blindness is total. A totally color-blind person will see everything as gray, but aside from this he is not likely to have difficulty distinguishing objects. Most cases of color blindness involve difficulty with only a few colors, the commonest ailment being an inability to tell red from green.

Compensation. It frequently happens that when one eye is destroyed in an injury the other will become as strong as the two together were prior to the accident. A case has been reported of a young school teacher who had one good eye and one amblyopic, or "lazy," eye. Treatments to make the non-seeing eye function properly were unsuccessful. Then, while she

was bob-sledding on a Christmas vacation, she ran into some bushes and injured her good eye so that it later became sightless. Shortly thereafter, the eye which had been amblyopic began to get better, and in time her sight improved to such an extent that, with the help of a correcting lens, she soon had virtually normal vision.

However, improvement of this type cannot be relied on to follow injuries. A great deal depends on the condition of the eyes before the accident and also on the nature of the wound. In fact, some accidents to a single eye produce a condition of "sympathetic ophthalmia," which may result in loss of sight in the uninjured eye.

Contrary to popular belief, a one-eyed person can do virtually anything that a normal person can do. There are, of course, a few occupations such as engraving, art, surgery and diamond cutting which require binocular fusion. But one good eye is a lesser handicap than two poor ones.

Reading the Charts. It is commonly supposed that anyone who can read the test charts well must have normal eyesight. Actually, it is possible to read every line on the chart and yet be almost blind. To understand this strange state of affairs we must remember that the normal eye sees not only straight ahead, but also up, down, to the left and to the right. When a person reads a doctor's test chart he is using central vision only; peripheral vision does not enter into the test. Nevertheless, peripheral vision is es-

sential to good eyesight. It prevents us from stumbling over surrounding objects, and warns us against anything that may be moving obliquely toward us. Without good peripheral vision it is not safe to walk alone in the streets. Anyone can readily prove this to himself by placing a long, hollow tube before each eye and then trying to walk about. He will find himself tripping and stumbling with nearly every step.

The outstanding disease characterized by this "tubular" type of vision is retinitis pigmentosa, a hereditary affliction which is also known as "night blindness." People who have this disease may be capable of doing exceedingly fine work with their eyes, yet they are unable to take a single step safely. Tubular vision also occurs in some cases of glaucoma. [See "What Doctors Know about Glaucoma," by Louise Cross, in the November 1946 AMERICAN MERCURY.]

In brain tumors and cerebral syphilis, large sectors of the field of vision may be blacked out. When it is the outer, or temporal, half of each field that is blind the disease is called bi-temporal hemianopsia. When a person is suffering from partial detachment of the retina the upper or lower portion of the visual field may be lost. A patient suffering from this latter disorder may be looking right at you without seeing more than your head and shoulders.

Spots. When a person persistently "sees spots before his eyes" he prob-

ably has an eye disease. However, it is possible for someone with perfectly normal eyes to have the same symptoms. A person may see spots because of a digestive derangement or a migraine attack.

"Rest Glasses." One of the most mischievous promotion stunts of recent years was the advertising to convince the public that "rest glasses" can help tired eyes. Anyone whose eyes are actually in need of rest will not be helped by these glasses. While he is wearing them his eyes, presumably, are open; and while they are open they are not being rested.

Eye strain proceeds from several causes. If a person is anemic or otherwise debilitated he will have a tendency to suffer from ocular fatigue. In this case he needs something to build him up, not glasses. If the strain is caused by a refractive error he needs only correcting lenses. In neither instance will he be helped by "rest glasses."

Cross Eyes. Parents often make the mistake of assuming that cross-eyed children will naturally outgrow the disorder. If the child's eyes turn only occasionally, *i. e.*, if the case is one of mild squint, he may outgrow it, but it is dangerous to wait for this, as the defective eye may become "lazy." If this happens the eye will not only remain crossed but will eventually cease to function entirely. The earlier a cross-eyed child is treated, the greater are the chances of a cure. This

does not necessarily involve an operation.

Notes on Glasses. Myths about eyeglasses are plentiful. One of the most popular is the belief that once anyone starts using glasses he will always have to wear them. Records from the files of almost any oculist could disprove this notion: they show that many persons require glasses only for a limited time. As soon as the refractive error is cleared up the glasses can be discarded. This is especially true for children, particularly far-sighted children. When individuals who require correction do not wear glasses the error is apt to increase, and vision will become poorer.

There is also the widespread belief that one should not continue to wear the same pair of glasses over a period of many years. Here it depends on the individual case. I have some patients whose eyes have been examined regularly, and who have not required a change, in over 25 years. If the glasses feel comfortable and give good vision there is probably no need for a change. It is advisable, however, to have the eyes examined about once a year.

Exercises for the eye are not quite the fad they used to be, but there are still many persons who believe that these exercises will enable them to throw away their glasses. This is pure nonsense. The innumerable cases of individuals who were "cured" by eye exercises are never found to be authentic when investigated by oculists. The oculists find either that they

never needed glasses or that they still need them. Eye exercises are valuable for cross eyes, but they cannot cure nearsightedness, farsightedness or astigmatism.

Another popular myth about glasses centers about the widespread fear of contact lenses. Although these lenses have been in use for more than half a century many patients are still afraid of them. Some believe that they may cause irritations in the eye which can lead to serious damage; others are afraid that if the lens were accidentally shattered the eye would be lacerated. Nowadays all contacts are made of unbreakable plastic, but even when they used to be made of glass there were no recorded cases of their causing eye injuries.

Incidentally, it should be noted that contact lenses cannot be used by everyone who wears regular eyeglasses; they are of value only for certain kinds of eye defects. And contacts, unlike other glasses, cannot be worn all day. They can be used for only a few hours at a time.

The Eye Doctors. Opticians, optometrists, oculists and ophthalmologists are all frequently confused in the public's mind. Many persons have a vague idea that all of them examine and treat eyes.

Actually, an optician does nothing but make lenses; he is not competent to examine eyes. Optometrists test the eyes for glasses, but do not treat eye diseases. (Many optometrists are also trained as opticians.) Some of them

have the degree of doctor of optometry (O.D.), but this does not mean that they are physicians or surgeons.

Oculists and ophthalmologists are the same thing. The terms are used synonymously to designate doctors of medicine who specialize in eye disorders; that is, doctors who not only test for glasses, but also examine and treat patients with all ocular afflictions.

Cataracts. A cataract in the eye does not usually lead to sudden blindness. The "senile" cataract, which frequently occurs in old age, never causes immediate loss of eyesight. The much rarer "traumatic" cataract, which sometimes follows an injury, may, however, result in sudden blindness.

Sudden blindness is not nearly as common as is generally supposed; most people whose eyesight is destroyed from organic causes lose their sight over a long period of time. The list of ailments which may cause gradual blindness is a long one: it includes trachoma, hereditary and acquired syphilis, chronic glaucoma, senile cataract, diseases producing ulceration of the cornea, and various degenerative maladies such as tuberculosis, diabetes and chronic nephritis.

The major cause of sudden blindness is uremia, a condition brought about by the cessation of the kidney function. Syphilis of the brain and tobacco poisoning may also bring about a marked impairment of the sight within a very short time. When-

ever there is a rapid loss of sight in only one eye, the cause is likely to be a disturbance in the circulation of the blood. An acute, painful attack of glaucoma, or a sudden detachment of the retina, are also possible causes of sudden unilateral blindness.

The Iris. Thousands of people are taken in every year by quasi-scientific writers who claim that any organic disease can be diagnosed from the appearance of the iris. These cultists maintain that every organ of the body is represented in a different portion of the iris. If they know what your iris looks like they can tell what's ailing you. For five dollars, most of them will send you the diagnosis by mail.

Although these men are all crackpots, it is a fact that many systematic disorders can be recognized from the appearance of the eyes. By pulling down a patient's lower lid and looking at the conjunctive (the pink lining of the lid), a physician can tell pretty well whether the man is anemic. Certain vitamin deficiencies leave characteristic signs about the lids and cornea. If the white of the eyes is lemon yellow, the patient has jaundice. In some instances tuberculosis and syphilis can be recognized in the iris, as well as in other parts of the eye. Kidney diseases, diabetes, arteriosclerosis, brain tumors, blood disorders and a number of other maladies cause changes in various parts of the eye, and can be recognized by an experienced ophthalmologist.

THE SOAP BOX



EDITORIAL NOTES

The third Christmas after the end of World War II finds mankind very far removed from the injunction in Luke II, 14: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." The atom bomb has cast terror into the hearts of all of us, and engulfed us with a dread of impending doom for the entire human race. The cover illustration in this issue, by Arthur Lidov, it seems to us, portrays the stark fear all around with remarkable effectiveness, so much so, indeed, that we have omitted the article that usually goes with a cover design.

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The dearth of real humor is one of the scandals of current American literature. We have printed very little of it because we haven't been able to get any more. Occasionally a charming bit, such as "A Footnote on L'Amour," by Ernest L. Meyer, in last July's issue, comes our way and we immediately make room for it so that our readers can enjoy it with-

out too much delay. But such pieces, alas, come in too rarely to this magazine or (according to our spies) to other magazines. However, to coin a cliché, hope springs eternal, and we have a hunch that there are plenty of good humorous pieces hidden in lockers, trunks, attics and cellars, and we call upon all the shy authors of these pieces to stop being shy and send them in to us. It would please us enormously to print one, two, and even three pieces of genuine humor in every issue.

~~~~~

Some readers have got the mistaken notion that "Mercury Reappraisals" deal only with political figures. That is not so. In last month's issue, for example, there was an able reappraisal of a literary personality, none other than that giant, Herman Melville. Reappraisals of other literary figures are in the works. But we wish to point out that we would also like to get reappraisals of financiers, religious leaders, engineers, physicists, college presidents, physicians — indeed, of anybody in any branch of

endeavor, who influenced his and future times. We have confined ourselves to Americans in our reappraisals so far.



The suspension of the *Progressive* of Madison, Wisconsin, is a severe blow to the liberal movement in the United States. Founded in 1909 by Senator Robert M. LaFollette, Sr., it has defended civil liberties at all times and everywhere, and never sank to that species of journalistic immorality that rationalizes the lack of them in such left totalitarian countries as Russia, Poland and Yugoslavia. It also advocated economic democracy of the American brand, which is to say, it advocated a free enterprise system which was genuinely free, as the late Justice Louis D. Brandeis envisaged it. Finally, in the spirit of a free democratic journal, it kept its pages open to the writings of worthy heterodox writers such as the Rev. Dr. John Haynes Holmes, Oswald Garrison Villard and McAlister Coleman. Of course, it had its aberrations, as every paper has, but all in all it was a fine publication, and it will be sorely missed by tens of thousands of intelligent, truly progressive American men and women.



Will the woman who sent us the letter on "Sex and the Double Standard," which leads off "The Open Forum" in this issue, please communicate with the editors?

PATTERN FOR WORLD REVOLUTION

One of the most interesting book reviews I ever read in *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* was Bertram D. Wolfe's essay, in the March 1947 issue, on a book called *Pattern for World Revolution*, by Ypsilon. Mr. Wolfe, whose opinion I have always respected, gave the book a glowing review. He said, among other things, that "the historians of the future will more frequently consult this book to get a key to the most dynamic force of our time than they will any other work so far published."

Subsequently, I bought the book and read it. As one who is familiar with all the main literature on Communism, I agree 100 per cent with Mr. Wolfe that it is one of the most important books on that subject ever published. This book was written — as anyone who reads it can see — by two men (Ypsilon is their pseudonym) who were obviously major figures in the Comintern, who knew the leaders intimately, and who were behind-the-scenes witnesses of its activities for years.

Despite all this, the book has been virtually ignored by the major book reviewers of the country. Aside from Mr. Wolfe's essay in *THE MERCURY*, it was not even mentioned by the nation's most influential newspapers and magazines. A quick check that I made revealed that it was not reviewed in *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *Saturday Review of Literature*, the *New*

York *Times*, the New York *Herald Tribune*, the San Francisco *Chronicle*, the Chicago *Times*, the Chicago *News* or the Chicago *Herald-American*.

This is a crime. It is a great book; as William Philip Simms said in his United Features column, it "is a must for every American who wishes to understand what is behind today's headlines."

And I should like to state that I am in no way connected with the authors of *Pattern for World Revolution* or with its publishers, Ziff-Davis.

BARTON O'BRIEN

Hollywood, Cal.

THE PROLETARIAT AND THE ARTS

What we may expect from the proletariat *in toto* is exemplified by the current tastes in literature and the fine arts.

Esthetic values are set by the patrons of genius. Genius is supposed to break through all limitations; as a matter of fact it is constrained by social authority. Even a genius grows discouraged in producing what positively no one will appreciate.

Today *demos* is the patron of the arts, and *demos* is forever confused, blatant, envious, untutored and immature. In consequence there has never been a lower ebb in literature and art than has been arrived at in the twentieth century. It is a preview of what all human life will descend to, and rapidly, under the rule, whether dictatorial or demo-

cratic, of the lowest orders of society — a life without refinement, without distinction, without breeding and without esthetic values.

There can be no fine arts in a world devoid of the fine art of living.

RALPH AIKEN

New Orleans, La.

ACTING ON A COMMUNITY LEVEL

It would be a good thing if people began to think again and act again on a community level. There has been altogether too much global thinking. Everybody is worried about the vast Negro problem in the United States, but nobody wants to do very much about a Negro employee or encourage a Negro neighbor. It is easy to be a long-distance liberal; it is much harder to practice liberalism.

Many of the problems of the world would disappear if more people brought them down to the lowest common denominator of personal relationship. Your Communist wants to share the wealth of the world, but is seldom willing to share what little wealth he has with his less fortunate friend, neighbor or relative. The man who sees no reason why the nations of the world can't resolve their differences without war, won't compromise enough to settle amicably a small disagreement with a competitor or possibly his wife.

All of this is another way of saying that if individual relationships were all on a high plane of decency and

humanity, national and international relationships would eventually be the same. This raises the important question — which came first?

X.Y.Z.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

PROPORTIONAL COMPENSATION

We can't have jobs unless we have job-providers.

Who are the job-providers?

Job-providers are those who have initiative; who are willing to risk their time, energy, and money in promoting, organizing and managing a business enterprise; and who pay their employees out of the earnings.

Business enterprises are essential to the production and distribution of the various commodities that we use in satisfying our daily wants. Business enterprises are also essential to the rendering of the various services connected with the satisfying of our wants.

To induce men to take a chance and establish a business that ministers to our wants, we must provide an incentive; just as we provide wages for the workers, or interest and dividends for the investors who furnish the capital.

The incentive for the business man — the wage-payer and job-provider as well as manager — is the profit that he makes by running the business. If the profit is insufficient to satisfy him for the risk that he has to assume, he will not continue in business; then the

wage-earner, the investor and the consumer will suffer.

Since the wage-earner, the investor, and the manager are all essential to a business enterprise; and since each one must have an incentive to take part, the best condition obtains when that incentive is made proportional to the respective efficiencies of each of the three factors. In other words, *proportional compensation* is the fundamental principle that we must recognize in seeking to adjust and settle the various labor-management controversies of the day.

ROBERT C. BARNETT

Jefferson City, Mo.

NOVELS ABOUT POLITICIANS

We have had novels about financiers, great lovers, preachers, tenors, gamblers, radio impresarios, theatrical producers, explorers, surgeons and inventors, but there has not been a single worthwhile novel about a politician. I am not referring here to the numerous fictionalized biographies of actual historical figures (in which category we could include the many novels about the late Huey Long); I mean full-blown, mature, imaginative works about men who rule cities and who wield powerful influence in the nomination and election of Governors and Presidents. What is behind this strange lack in our fiction?

ORVILLE P. WHITE

Santa Fe, N. M.

SOME "DOs" AND "DON'Ts" FOR

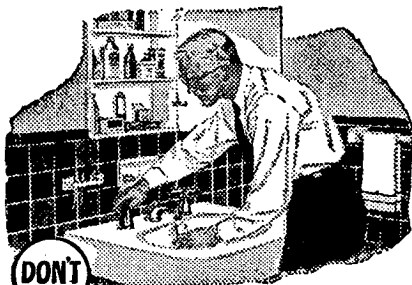


DO

—learn the warning signals that may mean appendicitis! The first sign of acute appendicitis is usually pain in the abdomen accompanied by nausea or vomiting.

The pain may be general at first, like a simple stomach-ache, but will probably become localized in the lower right side. It can be a sharp severe pain or a dull ache.

Symptoms sometimes vary, so any persistent, puzzling "stomach-ache" should have prompt medical attention.



DON'T

—treat yourself with home remedies! If you have an abdominal pain and are nauseated, avoid taking a laxative or enema. They increase pressure on the appendix and may cause it to rupture.

A study of appendicitis in one Eastern city showed that when appendicitis patients took *no* laxative, only 1 in 62 died. Of those who took a laxative, 1 in 19 died.

External pressure can also cause a rupture, so you shouldn't rub or massage the site of the pain. And it's wiser not to apply either a hot water bottle or an ice bag.

As more people learn more about this disease, appendicitis mortality can be brought still lower. For further information that may protect you and your family, send today for Metropolitan's free booklet 123-L "Appendicitis."

Metropolitan Life Insurance Company
1 Madison Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.
Please send me a copy of your booklet 123-L,
"Appendicitis."

Name

Street

City State

TO VETERANS—IF YOU HAVE

APPENDICITIS



—call your physician at once when such warnings appear! To-day, appendicitis is rarely fatal if recognized and properly treated in time.

But it may be difficult to diagnose. Your doctor may need to take blood counts or make other tests. Calling him promptly permits him to make such tests and to determine the proper treatment before serious damage has occurred.

Appendicitis takes only about half as many lives as it took 12 years ago. More lives could be saved if everyone called a doctor at the first sign of an attack.



—try to keep going normally if you suspect appendicitis. When appendicitis strikes, don't try to ignore the pain and keep on with your normal activities. Any physical exertion or exercise may lead to complications, so lie down, in bed if possible, and stay there.

The pain may let up but this does not mean the attack has passed. It's up to you to keep quiet and relaxed until the doctor has had a chance to examine you.

Food and liquids can also be dangerous. Avoid eating or drinking anything, except water, until your doctor has examined you.

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THE DALLAS MORNING NEWS

BY STANLEY WALKER

THE real editor of the Dallas *Morning News*, the most influential newspaper in the Southwest, is Davy Crockett, sometime member of Congress from Tennessee, bear-hunter, and hero of the Alamo.

For it was Colonel Crockett, the sage in buckskin, who said, "Be sure you're right, then go ahead." This advice appears in scores of spots throughout the three-story building of the *News* at Lamar and Commerce Streets in downtown Dallas. The late George Bannerman Dealey, long the publisher of the *News*, came upon the Crockett aphorism when he was a young man and adopted it as his life slogan.

Clearly the Crockett saying implies caution. The *News* is cautious. Critics sometimes accuse it of being exasperatingly slow in making up its mind, and of hesitating too long to dig into messes which cry to high heaven for exposure.

But once the *News* decides to go ahead the effect is powerful. Readers often delay forming judgments until they see what attitude the *News*

takes. No Thunderer, not even adept at the techniques of semi-sensational journalism, the *News* nevertheless packs a healthy punch. When at length it finally swings into action, its cold facts and clear reasoning are as devastating in their way as Crockett and his great rifle, Old Betsy, were on the parapets of the Alamo back in 1836. However, Davy was a rough-neck; he once said he was "half horse, half alligator." The dear old *News* is a model of decorum.

The source of the *News'* strength is not difficult to identify. It is the organ of the Reasonable Man. It is unimpressed by the utopians and the mountebanks. It has scorn for the liar, especially in public life. It believes in thrift, and in ordinary common sense and decency. It is not out for easy money. Its record for consistency, though not perfect, is high. It makes no truce with the prurient and the shoddy. For principle, it has risked ruin without flinching. All these old-fashioned virtues may be lumped together under one label — character.

STANLEY WALKER was formerly city editor of the New York Herald Tribune. He has written several books, including *The Night Club Era*, *City Editor and Mrs. Astor's Horse*. His most recent contribution to THE AMERICAN MERCURY was "Buttermilk Tom," which appeared in the October issue. He is now living on a ranch in Lampasas County in Texas.

This essential quality had its classic test in May 1921, when the Ku Klux Klan was beginning its spread over many parts of the country. Its power in Texas was great enough to elect men to high office. Dallas was the home town of the egregious Hiram Wesley Evans, the dentist who called himself Wizard. When the Klan staged its first torchlight parade in Dallas, the *News* said:

The spectacle of 800 masked and white-gowned men parading the streets of Dallas under banners proclaiming them Knights of the Ku Klux Klan and self-appointed guardians of the community's political, social and moral welfare has its ridiculous aspects. . . . But it also has a serious significance which will not be lost on the minds of men who cherish the community's good name and have the intelligence to understand how well designed that exhibition was to bring it under reproach.

It was a slander on Dallas because the only conditions which could be given to excuse the organization do not exist. White supremacy is not imperiled. Vice is not rampant. The constituted agencies of government are still regnant. And if freedom is endangered, it is by the redivivus of the mob spirit in the disguising garb of the Ku Klux Klan.

With full knowledge of the nature of the fight it was entering, the *News* threw down the gage of battle. The conflict lasted for about three years. The Klan placed a circulation and advertising boycott on the *News*. Losses were severe. The *News* printed the New York *World's* famous series of news stories exposing the Klan. The *World* ran no danger in printing these stories; the *News*, in the heart of the

Klan country, was gambling with its life. In the end the *News* was triumphant.

Less spectacular but indicative of the character of the *News* was its attitude toward oil advertising in the boom which began during the first World War, following the discovery of several oil fields. Texas was oil crazy. Dallas was swarming with promoters, confidence men and assorted sharpers. There was much advertising to be had from them. The *News*, realizing the difficulty of separating the sound from the spurious, placed the most drastic sort of censorship on oil advertising, thereby throwing out the window hundreds of thousands of dollars of advertising revenue. Here again the *News* increased its prestige among the solid citizens.

The independence of the *News* (there are those who in moments of pique have called it "arrogance") has been shown in many ways on both economic and political issues: In 1896 the *News*, which had been more or less friendly to William Jennings Bryan, and which has always referred to itself as an independent Democratic newspaper, ditched Bryan in favor of William McKinley on the sound money issue. The action made enemies, but McKinley carried Dallas County.

In the 1932 Presidential campaign, the *News* was on the side of Franklin D. Roosevelt; in particular it approved the 1932 Democratic platform. It went along with Roosevelt on some of his innovations, but soon

doubts arose. The *News* viewed with sadness, not unmixed with contempt, Roosevelt's airy dismissal of the main planks of his platform. It was shocked by many of his economic experiments. It denounced his court-packing scheme as sharply as any Republican paper. By the time the campaign of 1940 came around, the *News* was ready to swing to the side of Wendell L. Willkie. Likewise in 1944 the *News* supported Dewey and Bricker.

Another aspect of the *News*' policy is almost revolutionary. This newspaper is a booster for Dallas, for Texas and the whole Southwest, but always with sensible reservations. Where others go the whole hog, refusing to see any defects in Texas — the biggest this, the fattest that, the prettiest so on — the *News* day after day, year in and year out, reminds its readers of certain unpleasant facts. Examples:

Texas ranks about thirty-eighth in education. The fertility of the blacklands of Texas is forty per cent less than it was half a century ago. The yield per acre of Texas cotton land is the lowest of all the cotton-growing states. California and Iowa are ahead of Texas in the value of agricultural products. The administration of the criminal law in Texas is a farce. The support which Texas gives to its libraries is ridiculously low. The number of divorce decrees granted in Dallas is about equal to the number of marriage licenses issued. The treatment of the Negro in Texas — before the law, in education, and in economic opportunity — is dishonest and shame-

ful. The state constitution is an antiquated patchwork. Juvenile delinquency in parts of Dallas is as serious as in the slum areas of New York City.

The foregoing are only a few of the stock reminders which the *News* has ready for the professional optimists. But no one should get the idea that the *News* is a common scold, a testy old lady continually finding fault. The *News* is always delighted with anything that adds to the glory, beauty and solvency of Dallas and the rest of the Southwest, but it simply reserves the right, when the blow-hards are in full cry, to ask quietly, "Is that so?"

II

As the only morning paper in Dallas, the *News* is solidly entrenched, as well as a bit complacent. In justification, it is true enough that there is hardly a noteworthy improvement in that city which has not been made possible, in large part, by the support and foresight of the *News* — or, more specifically, by the vision of the late George Bannerman Dealey.

The *News* more or less grew up with Dallas. The city is now reaching close toward the half-million mark in population; even the more conservative boosters say that in another fifteen or twenty years the population may reach a million. Seventy years ago Dallas was an obscure trading post on the winding, muddy, troublesome Trinity River — a spot without many natural advantages. But it had the makings of an important distribution

center, and it sat in the middle of the vast black dirt area of northeast Texas. Today it has large and diverse industries; its skyscrapers are tall enough to impress even a New Yorker; the air, since natural gas is used as fuel, is clear; the city is a center for cultural affairs, fashions, amusements, jobbing, insurance and finance.

Mr. George Bannerman Dealey used to profess skepticism concerning the wisdom of trying to make Dallas a city larger than, say, one of 150,000, or at most 300,000. He doubted that mere size was anything to be proud of, or that a larger city would necessarily make life any better. However, this fine old pragmatist came to accept phenomenal growth with philosophical calm, and gracefully pocketed the profits accruing to the *News*.

In October 1946 the *News*, with speechmaking and prayers, broke ground for a magnificent new building on a 200-by-1000-foot tract at the main gateway to Dallas, on Young Street, virtually across from the Union Station and facing Dallas' only downtown park. The building will cost more than \$2 million exclusive of land. With this plant, if it chooses, the *News* can print enough papers to take care of more than twice its present circulation.

The new building is a part of the program of the present *News* management to make sure that the paper remains the most important in Texas. The *News* today, because of the growth of other Texas cities with pretty good papers, has not quite the

solid, statewide prestige that it had forty and fifty years ago. Moreover, because of the newsprint shortage and other difficulties, the *News* has seen fit for many months to freeze its circulation at 146,000 daily and 153,000 Sunday. The space devoted to news has been trimmed to a dangerous point. The *News* has been unable to take care of all its advertisers. It must expand.

Back of these lively stirrings is the present boss of the *News*, Edward Musgrove (Ted) Dealey, son of the late George Bannerman Dealey. He has been president of the publishing company since 1940, but he was not completely on his own until the death of his father early in 1946.

Ted Dealey makes no bones about being something of a frustrated literary man. He attended Harvard. Thirty years ago he was regarded as a "promising" writer. It had been planned originally that he was to be the head of the news and editorial end of the paper while his brother, Walter Allen Dealey, was to confine himself to the business and advertising side. The death of Walter Dealey in 1934 forced a revision of this family program, and Ted left the editorial rooms and went down to the first floor beside his father in the publisher's office.

Ted Dealey, now getting a bit heavier, and gray around the temples, applied himself with true Dealey pertinacity to learning the ins and outs of newspaper publishing. He can hold up his end in any discussion at conclaves of publishers, whether the

talk is of newsprint, rates, circulation, or communications costs. He doesn't try to write much any more.

Since George Bannerman Dealey and his associates purchased the *News* in 1926 its value has more than doubled. They paid \$2,725,000 for it, but the notes given in part payment were liquidated by the paper's earnings. It is probable that \$6 million would not be enough to buy the *News* today, if it could be bought at all.

The Dealey family, owning virtually all the stock, is in complete control of the destinies of the *News*. Ted Dealey's mother is chairman of the board. His brother-in-law, J. M. Moroney, is vice-president and secretary. The only non-Dealey officer of the company is M. M. Donosky, treasurer and reputed financial wizard. And a crop of new family stalwarts are coming along, grandsons of George Bannerman Dealey: Ben Dechard, Joe Dealey, Walter A. Dealey, Jr., and James M. Moroney, Jr. They all work for the paper, and will run it when Ted Dealey gets ready to step down.

III

The history of the Dallas *Morning News* has not been one of unbroken success. One of the paper's substantial failures was its attempt to publish an afternoon paper, the *Journal*, established in 1914. The *Journal*, notwithstanding the fact that it had the resources of the *News* behind it, could make little headway against the rival afternoon papers, the *Times-Herald* and the *Dispatch*. In 1938 the Dealeys

sold the *Journal* to Karl Hoblitzelle, the theater magnate, and associates, who combined it with the *Dispatch*. The combined paper was a failure, and soon suspended, leaving only the bumbling but prosperous *Times-Herald* in the afternoon field.

In his day George Bannerman Dealey believed that the publisher of a paper should not be cluttered up with extraneous financial interests. Ted Dealey still holds firmly to that policy today. However, the *News* early went into the radio business, sinking more than one million dollars before it began to show a profit. The *News'* radio outlets are stations WFAA and KDKO, and last year it established a frequency modulation station, KERA.

The *News* is quick enough to resent what it regards as unwarranted interference. On May 9, 1944, the *News* carried an ad in its own help-wanted columns; "Wanted — Colored man to work at night as paper handler. Essential industry. See Martin Josch, press-room, Dallas News, after 7 P.M." Soon the fat was in the fire. The regional director of the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practices wrote a letter to the *News* saying that the ad, by limiting applicants to "the narrow field described," barred persons of other race or color from applying and was therefore discriminatory. On May 18 the *News* printed an article, cold and legalistic but a pile-driver, in which it said:

The *News* insists that all advertisements, in addition to being truthful, be specific

and fully informative. The position of the *News* is that if a mother wants a white girl to take care of her children, that is exactly what she wants, not a Negro.

Virtually the entire Southern press, rallied behind the *News*. The *News* hired its Negro, and the FEPC bothered the *News* no more.

The *News* also fought a battle over the Fair Labor Standards Act, which, by the way, was one of the pieces of New Deal legislation which it approved in principle. At the time the act went into effect, the *News* raised the point that "the difficulties in the way of practical application are many." The *News* did not want to go on a strictly hourly basis, with time and a half for overtime, and neither did most of its employees. Nobody at the *News* had ever punched a clock, and nobody wanted to punch one. The *News* management for years had been frankly, generously paternalistic. On the advice of counsel, a simple form of contract was drawn up which would set an hourly rate of pay sufficiently low so that even in long weeks the guaranteed weekly wage would include at least time and a half for overtime hours; at the same time it would not penalize the employee during the short weeks because it would guarantee him the wage he was earning. That is, a reporter earning \$60 a week agreed that his hourly wage scale was one dollar, but the company guaranteed his weekly pay of \$60 regardless of how few hours he actually worked. Early in 1940 the government challenged this plan.

The matter was taken to the aged George Bannerman Dealey, and he reverted to Davy Crockett. "Are you right?" he asked. His lieutenants assured him they believed they were. "Then go ahead," said old G.B.

At the first court test, in Federal Court in Dallas, the *News* won. The government appealed to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, sitting in New Orleans. Again the *News* won. On a writ of certiorari, the United States Supreme Court agreed to pass on the dispute. The *News* won in this test by a five-to-four decision. Later the government made another attempt to kill the *News* arrangement — known familiarly by this time as the Belo Plan. A suit was brought against a California company which had copied the essential features of the Belo Plan in its contracts. Again the Supreme Court upheld the plan.

Thus, victorious, the *News* went about its business. It voluntarily instituted the five-day week in May 1946. Paternalism, even at great cost, is still the rule. Men who had been hired as replacements during the war were not discharged when old employees came back from the services. Another powerful hold which the *News* has on its employees is the G. B. Dealey Retirement Pension Plan, which pays employees at the age of 65 one per cent of all earnings at the *News* as an annual retirement income; the plan costs the company \$150,000 a year. Of the 700 employees, 128 have been with the *News* twenty-one years or more.

In recent years, the *News*, along with many other Southwestern papers, has been paying decent wages. For a long time the Newspaper Guild (CIO), the union of editorial and news workers, has looked with hungry longing at the *News*, knowing that if that bellwether could be brought into the fold, the job of unionizing Southwestern reporters and copy readers might be a little less difficult. The Guild has got nowhere with the people at the *News*, who are proud of their paper, are paid enough to eat on, and are perfectly sure that they can spend the rest of their lives there unless they commit some unpardonably outrageous breach of the moral code. Mr. Dealey, Presbyterian sobersides though he was, was remarkably tolerant of tipplers and even of those occasional employees who rebelled at the shackles of monogamy.

IV

Old Mr. Dealey moved with the calm and propriety of an English gentleman. He accomplished reforms and civic improvements by suggestion, by quiet persuasion, never by headlong attack. No one at the office ever saw him in his shirtsleeves; on the most sizzling day he would be wearing an alpaca coat. He thought it would be good if all employees wore coats, but he never pressed the point. Up to the day before his death — he died in his eighty-seventh year — he kept close to his office. He was always polite, unhurried. Usually he was smoking a cigar. Many honors came to him; his

schooling had been scant, and he was proud of his honorary membership in Phi Beta Kappa. He wore the key. In his last years he was regarded as Texas' noblest citizen. Today a likeness of him, painted by Douglas Chandor, who was Franklin D. Roosevelt's favorite portrait painter, hangs in the lobby of the *News* building. It shows an elderly man, with bright blue eyes, close-cropped white mustache, high forehead, and an expression of friendly serenity.

The people who get out the *News* today compare fairly well with any of the journalistic menageries assembled in the past. Neither Fed Dealey, the big boss, nor any of his field marshals, seems inclined toward a strong rule. Department heads do pretty much as they please. Harry Withers, the gentle old managing editor, occasionally has to administer a rebuke; he does it in such a low voice, and in such kindly and apologetic fashion, that the culprit half the time doesn't know what it's all about.

The *News*, viewed strictly as a disseminator of news, is so cramped for space these days that it cannot be regarded as being in its best period. The heart of the *News* is the editorial page, which is one of the best in the country. Though rarely brilliant, it is clear, well-reasoned, and high in information content. The position of the *News* on many major issues is so well established that any literate editorial writer could hardly go wrong. There are not many arguments in editorial conference. Free trade, state's

rights, temperance but not prohibition, a two-party system, no government subsidies for special groups, traffic safety, city planning, more intelligent agricultural methods, economy in government, civil liberties, the right to work, military preparedness, a better break for the Negro — these are among the main planks of the *News*' platform.

William B. Ruggles runs the editorial page. Assisting him are Lynn Landrum, a forceful writer who also writes a signed column three times a week; Stuart McGregor, an authority on facts and figures concerning Texas, who is also editor of the *Texas Almanac and Industrial Guide*, a useful little book published biennially by the A. H. Belo Corporation; Victor Schoffemayer, agriculture and science editor, who in his more than twenty years with the *News* has done perhaps more than any other person to improve backward and wasteful agricultural practices in Texas (he recently announced his retirement); Sam H. Acheson, the historian of the *News*; Wayne Gard, who once wrote a biography of Sam Bass, the outlaw; and Richard West, a former reporter who for the last year or so has been delighting the twittering customers with cute little nature editorials — sometimes pretty well done, at that, for those who like to read of the robins and the redbuds.

A nationally known fixture on the editorial page is John Francis Knott, the cartoonist, who since 1905 has had a part in crystallizing Texas ideas.

Knott is perhaps most widely known for his cartoon character, Old Man Texas, a raw-boned, strong-faced fellow who is supposed to typify the sturdy spirit of the salt-of-the-earth Texan. The original model of this character was Uncle Jimmy Boyd, a friend of Knott's who lived in Lancaster, a small town near Dallas. The figure and face of Old Man Texas are more familiar to Texans than Uncle Sam's lineaments.

Throughout most of its history the *News* has been friendly to what currently passed for Culture. The present era is bigger and better than ever. The book pages on Sunday (they are by all odds the best in the Southwest) were edited for a generation by John McGinnis, who recently was made literary editor emeritus. His assistant, Lon Tinkle, a young man of much vigor and acute perception, has taken over the job. Dallas, largely because of the efforts of the *News*, is the most bookish city in Texas.

But the real Cultural Czar, as every knowing visitor to Dallas soon learns, is John Rosenfield, who is in charge of the drama, motion pictures, music, art, amusements and the entire area of the higher life. Rosenfield wields great power. He brooks no nonsense, nor does he write down to his audience. If they can't understand his big words, let them consult the dictionary, or lump it.

The young hopeful in the handling of news is Felix McKnight, a former Associated Press man who is assistant managing editor and is being groomed

to succeed the aging Harry Withers. In his reporting days, Mr. McKnight showed great zip. In the spring of 1947, during Holy Week, the *News* ran a series of front-page pieces, signed by McKnight, on the last week of the life of Christ. The series made a hit, and was reprinted in booklet form for distribution to clamorous subscribers. They were eloquent pieces, and only the more conservative thinkers among the *News*' readers ventured to suggest that the job had already been done with some competence by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and that the efforts of the Johnny-Come-Lately, St. Felix, were pretty but unnecessary.

The *News*, in the last two years, has fallen for the funny (or silly, depending on how one looks at it) weather story, originated by the New York *World-Telegram*. Paul Crume writes these little gems of pert nonsense. To old fogies who want their weather news straight, the use of valuable space for this purpose is deplorable indeed. Efforts to be kittenish are always unbecoming to the Old Lady of Lamar Street.

The *News* makes some startling personnel decisions at times, and often they work out beautifully. For example, for years the city editor was Ted Barrett, able and intelligent, but as crabbed, acidulous a man as ever sat on the city desk. He kept complaining, among other matters, that the *News* was deficient in its public relations and its general attitude toward the customers. One day three or

four years ago the management took him at his word, yanked him off the podium and made him public relations man for the paper. He belly-ached for an hour or so out of sheer habit and then buckled down to his new job. He has been successful, and has turned out to be one of the most effective glad-handers and soft-soapers in all Texas.

Complaints against the *News* weigh little against its record of accomplishment. Especially do they seem trivial when one recalls the patient, consistent career of George Bannerman Dealey, whose admonitions and example in many ways still wield much authority at the *News*. He, and his paper, stood back of every constructive idea that would help transform Dallas from a frontier mud-hole into a beautiful, modern city. Even more important, perhaps, is the record of how, when the paper thought itself right, it never cringed from a fight, whether the antagonist was Sam Houston himself, a carpet-bag governor, a radical Jim Hogg, a spotted Senator Joseph Weldon Bailey, an odious Jim Ferguson, or the proponents of something called a New Deal.

However, to insiders the most heart-warming trait of the *News* is its paternalism, which has taken many strange forms. From my own recollection are two incidents. I worked at the *News* as a reporter in 1918 and part of 1919. On the staff when I first went there was a talented but lazy reporter named Chester T. Crowell,

who later achieved some prominence as a magazine writer. The city editor would send Chester out on several assignments; Chester would go up to the lobby of the Southland Hotel, sit in a chair reading Balzac until time to go back to the office, and then report "nothing doing today." The city editor, knowing that something, sometime, must be doing, hit on a sly scheme; he would give Crowell his assignments and then, as soon as the slothful Balzacian had left the office, he would give me the identical list of assignments. (Neither Crowell nor I knew of this trick until years later.) I, being young and almost frenzied with ambition, would go out and burn up the town, reporting back sometimes with three or four columns of news. Chester didn't know what was going on, because he rarely read the paper. At last, when he was perfectly sure that Chester didn't mean to cover his assignments, the editor saw to it that Chester was shifted to other work. But Chester was never reprimanded; that might have hurt his feelings.

Another example: For a time when I was on the *News* I shared a small apartment with Silliman Evans, another reporter, who is now the pub-

lisher of the Nashville *Tennessean*. One day Evans disappeared. All I knew was that he had gone to Fort Worth to work for Amon Carter's *Star-Telegram*. A rumor was that he had been fired, but for what, no one could say. Twenty years later, at a bar in New York, I was talking to the thoughtful, mossy-haired old gentleman who had been in charge at night when I was on the *News*.

"Did I ever tell you why I fired Evans?" he asked abruptly.

"No," I said, "and I've often wondered. He left me with an apartment on my hands."

"Well," said the old man, "I used to watch you and Evans leaving the office together late every night and I would say to myself, 'Those boys will get into mischief.' I worried about it a lot. He was a little older than you and I was afraid he might lead you astray. Then one night I said to myself, 'Damn it, you must do something about this. Evans is not worth the powder and shot to blow him to hell, but that young Walker — he's worth saving.' So-oo — I fired Evans."

You can't help loving a paper like that, though, as a matter of fact, if I remember right, I was the one who was leading Evans astray.



THE THEATRE

by GEORGE JEAN NATHAN



THE DECLINE OF COMEDY

LEADING the mortality statistics of the theatre is artificial comedy. The mantle so handsomely handed down by Congreve to Sheridan and by Sheridan to Wilde has turned into a tattered, patched, and seedy evening coat. Since Wilde, the genre has deteriorated into nothing better than the kind of thing that Noel Coward stands for: comedy not artificial in any authentic critical sense but merely trivial.

The writing of true artificial comedy commands a mind of sorts and the genius for distilling the artificial from the real. The purely artificial mind can not master it. It calls for a wit based upon a sound observation and criticism of the peoples and mores of its period; for a wit, in short, that however seemingly capricious digs pointedly into the fashions, manners and foibles of its time. Without mind, it becomes simply frippery, masked with inconsequential humors. Its commentary becomes vaudeville, and its

picture of its people is developed in a mental dark room in the acids of wise-cracks. The artificiality lies not in the work itself but in the playwright.

It takes an uncommon hand and an uncommon skill to create an artificial flower that, while plainly artificial, will give the impression of bearing a close resemblance to a real one, minus only the scent. The artificial comedy of these later years is all too transparently manufactured of cheap, tinted tissue, minus not only the scent but any stem that resembles even remotely anything that ever grew out of the soil.

The contrast between the two species of comedy of manners may be illustrated, rather appallingly, by a scene from Congreve on the one hand and by one from Coward on the other. Herewith, Congreve:

MRS. MILLAMANT: I won't be called names after I'm married; positively I won't be called names.

MIRABEL: Names!

MRS. MILLAMANT: Ay, as wife, spouse, my dear, joy, jewel, love, sweetheart, and the rest of that nauseous-cant in which men-

and their wives are so fulsomely familiar — I shall never bear that. Good Mirabel, don't let us be familiar or fond, nor kiss before folks, like my lady Fadler and Sir Francis, nor go to Hyde Park together the first Sunday in a new chariot, to provoke eyes and whispers, and then never to be seen together again; as if we were proud of one another the first week and ashamed of one another ever after. Let us never visit together nor go to a play together; but let us be very strange and well-bred: let us be as strange as if we had been married a great while, and as well-bred as if we were not married at all.

Herewith Coward:

CLARE (*at telephone*): Hallo — yes — hallo, darling — no, it's Clare — yes, he's here — No, I really couldn't face it — yes, if I were likely to go to India I'd come, but I'm not likely to go to India — I think Rajahs bumble up a house-party so terribly — yes, I know he's different, but the other one's awful — Angela had an agonizing time with him — all the dining-room chairs had to be changed because they were leather and his religion prevented him sitting on them — all the dogs had to be kept out of the house because they were unclean, which God knows was true of the Bedlington, but the other ones were clean as whistles — and then to round everything off he took Laura Merstham in his car and made passes at her all the way to Newmarket — all right, darling, here he is — (*to Bogey*) it's Nina, she wants to talk to you —

BOGEY (*at telephone*): Hallo, Nin — I can't on Wednesday, I've got a Guest Night — it's a hell of a long way, it'd take hours.

II

The comedy of manners, however, is not the only form that has fallen on evil days. Polite or so-called drawing-room comedy seems also

largely to have gone the way of the other.

With Haddon Chambers, Hubert Henry Davies, R. C. Carton, Robert Marshall and their ilk dead, with W. S. Maugham's retirement from the theatre, and with Frederick Lonsdale latterly delinquent, England's sole contribution in late years, aside from the Coward aforesaid, has been a parcel of Rattigans and Savorys, all without exception unequipped for anything but minor glossy showshop stuffs, feeble, strained, and generally witless. France, once a source of much critical pleasure, has provided nothing, or at best only weak variants of what her playwrights had earlier managed so deftly. Bourdet, Guitry, Achard and the rest, when they have written anything at all, have produced plays either considerably inferior to their earlier works or obvious, tired, and crippled paraphrases.

Drawing-room comedy has never been the métier of German playwrights, and Germany has hence never figured in the form. Austrian playwrights similarly have seldom been fetched by the species and, when they were, have missed it. But Hungary in other days exported some agreeable specimens, as those who recall the Molnár school remember, and that school seems to have dried up sometime since.

What is left? Italy? Italy, like Spain, never gifted in such divertissements, has not produced anything in years, and even then produced noth-

ing in any way comparable to the English product. America? Let us see.

Only three men in the United States today figure in the form: Kelly, Behrman, and the naturalized former Englishman, van Druten. Kelly, however, is not strictly to be defined as a writer of polite drawing-room comedy, though his last play, *The Fatal Weakness*, a relatively less able job than he has done in other directions, falls into the category. His plays, though sometimes scenically drawing-room and here and there intermittently suggesting polite comedy, are of a more serious essence and tend rather toward straight drama. They lack, too, the sense of fashion and deliberate wit of the genre. Behrman, who promised to be a polished comedy writer of some stature and who in one or two plays came off nicely, has in later years fallen victim to a social consciousness and didacticism which have played havoc with him. The sound writer of polite comedy is skillful in the art of saying something as if it amounted to nothing. The Berhmans say nothing as if it amounted to something. And in a voice that banishes their comedy purpose.

Van Druten perhaps comes closest at the moment to achieving the form. He has grace and style and wit. His weaknesses lie in his failure to catch consistently the nonchalance proper to urbane comedy and what seems to be an occasional calculated playing down to the groundlings. But there

is in his writing a degree of taste and manner, a cultivated point of view, and a quality of humor that in combination serve his ends.

III

Thirty-seven years ago, Walter Prichard Eaton, in an essay titled *Our Comedy of Bad Manners*, observed:

All of us who care for the amenities of life, who esteem correct deportment in its proper place, who are charmed by grace and distinction and hurt by its absence from plays where it belongs, have suffered only too often from the prevalent bad manners of the American theatre. . . . It is characteristic of a certain type of jingo "Americanism" to consider good manners as a sign of social snobbishness and to regard personal grace and distinction as a cover for mental and moral sloth, even a cover for the idle rich who ride down Fifth Avenue with lap dogs. This attitude is both a misapprehension of what constitutes good manners and personal distinction, and a gross flattery of those who ride down Fifth Avenue with lap dogs. . . . Could the stage display more personal distinction, could it put forth the charm of good manners, of style and elegance, could it show the grace of correctly spoken English, it would not, perhaps, so entirely hold the mirror up to American nature (as that nature is expressed in American manners), but it would make American nature more worthy to be mirrored.

Though there are nowadays left few idle rich to ride or even walk down Fifth Avenue with or without lap dogs, the scene as Eaton described it has otherwise after these many years little changed. The comedy of bad manners still operates profusely on our stage. Sometimes its vulgarity

is amusing; much more often its vulgarity is painful. In the better cases, as in some such exhibit as *Born Yesterday*, we get bad manners deliberately dramatized for their own sake, and the result is entertaining. In the middle ground, as in such as *John Loves Mary*, we get bad manners often confused in the playwright's mind with good, and the result is a species of backstairs farce lodged in a semi-drawing-room atmosphere. In the worst cases, as in such as *Heads or Tails*, we get playwrights who can not distinguish between good manners and bad and who give us the bad in the full conviction that they are the very essence of the good, let alone extremely high-toned.

As a sample of the dialogue in these latter abnormities, I submit the following from the last named:

SHE (*soulfully*): We will go to Mama Gorgongolies in the Village and have chianti and cherries jubilee. (*Exploding with enthusiasm*): We won't get to bed until twelve o'clock.

HE (*coily*): Let's make it ten.

SHE (*even more coily*): Let's.

HE (*quite beside himself*): And you will wear your black nightgown.

SHE (*pretending to be shocked*): Darling!

HE (*aggressively*): You will, won't you?

SHE (*overpowered by his ardor and demurely dropping her eyes*): Yes.

The comedy of bad manners at its best is often critically condoned on the ground that it reflects more or less accurately the American characters and acts with which it deals. The condonation undoubtedly has a measure of justification. Bad manners,

vulgarity, assertiveness, and the insecurity of vocabulary that seeks refuge in profanity and even obscenity are characteristics of a considerable proportion of our citizenry, who would be as out of place in a drawing-room as an office chair or a rhinoceros; and it is rank snobbishness to insist that drama either elevate them and present them otherwise or dismiss them entirely. But that is not the point. The point is rather that the comedy in question all too frequently employs an honest vulgarity to exaggerated vulgar ends and in the process renders it palpably dishonest.

The notion that all the characters in Restoration comedy were to the drawing-room born and bred is, of course, ridiculous. Restoration comedy, as almost everyone knows, had its bounders and vulgarians quite as modern American comedy has them, and they were as greatly part and parcel of their time as are ours. But the dramatists who wrote of them were writers of distinction, whereas those who write of them today may occasionally be gifted in dramaturgy but otherwise are literary hacks. Their writing gives the impression that their vulgar characters are of a piece with themselves, and the dramatic bad manners much their personal own. Nor need we hark back to Restoration, Victorian and the earlier Edwardian times to note the difference. There probably has been no comedy more plentiful in cads, bounders and vulgarians than Maugham's

Our Betters. Yet the treatment and the sheer literary skill lift the play to some relative elevation and one which our later American comedy fabricators have not approximated.

IV

The Lindsay-Crouse dramatization of the Clarence Day memoirs, *Life with Father*, has enjoyed the record consecutive run for a comedy in the American theatre. Of the more than six million people who have seen it and contributed more than ten million dollars to its box-office, it is probably safe to say that the greater number regard it as the closest approach to a comedy of good manners which they have engaged in the period. Their regard for it in that light is doubtless due to the circumstances that its characters are fairly affluent, of respectable social status, and dress well, that they speak the English language without a Broadway accent, that they can afford servants, and that the setting is a well-furnished so-called "morning room" in a house on then fashionable Madison Avenue in New York. Yet, for all these externals, the fact remains that it is for the larger part not a comedy of good manners at all, but one of very bad. The central figure, the father of the title, is a compendium of bad manners; several of the other characters would have been kicked out of any Edith Wharton drawing-room, presuming that they could have got into the house in the first place; the general conduct is severely at odds

with the punctilio; the house is run in a middle-class manner; the atmosphere is middle-class; and the speech is equally middle-class. But so used are our audiences to something much lower in social tone that by comparison the comedy seems to them to be something quite definitely tony.

Our theatregoers, in brief, have become so impregnated with the comedy of bad manners that one in which the manners are even a shade better strikes them as being the height of fashionable good taste and refinement.

And conditions seem to be growing increasingly worse. The manner which a Langdon Mitchell brought into our theatre and a Jesse Lynch Williams after him has all but disappeared. Our present day comedy most often sounds as if it had been conceived and written by men whose idea of a butler has been gained from the performances of Arthur Treacher, whose idea of style begins and ends with the wearing of dinner coats, whose notion of polite wit is a wise-crack about finger-bowls, whose conception of cultivated conversation is anything that embraces allusions to Freud, Gide and Dorothy Parker, and whose drawing-rooms or their equivalents are notable chiefly for the obvious discomfort of characters who are asked to appear nonchalantly at ease in them. This is nowhere more evident than in those comedies which hopefully aspire to the polite label. The unintentional vulgarity in such

instances is frequently double that of the intentional in other dramatic directions.

What it all comes to, I suppose, is the needlessly repeated criticism that one can write only about what one himself knows and feels and has at least to a degree experienced. Our playwrights today with rare exception do not know of what they write, and the result is much like an "English

society comedy" which its author, a young man resident in Bridgeport, Connecticut, not long ago sent to me, unsolicited, for my inspection. It was not necessary for me to read farther than the cast of characters and the setting. The former disclosed, at the top of the list, the following: "Count Debrett, a Lord." The latter was described as "The Drawing-room and adjoining Boudoir of the Duchess."

THROUGH TRAIN

BY KAYE STARBIRD

I looked out through the window of the train
And saw the place pass by across the river.
The rocks still sloped as gray and sheer as rain
Beneath the meadows I had left forever.
Hung in the east, an early opal star
Looked down upon the walks I used to know,
Not noticing that in my passing car
I went the way all transient shadows go.
There was no change in anything at all:
The hills were still as blue against the sky;
The river still spread rumpled like a shawl;
Only I in my train was going by.
I might have wept, but the low engine whined
On round a bend, leaving the past behind.

WHITE ON BLACK

A STORY

BY TESS SLESINGER

ONE of the private schools attended by the nicest children from the West Eighties and Nineties fifteen years ago followed not only the liberal practice of mixing rich and poor, Gentiles and Jews, but also made a point of including Negroes; not many, but just enough so that when one ran one's eye over the neat rows of pink and white faces collected each morning for assembly, it stumbled here and there — perhaps three or four times in all the auditorium — on an equally scrubbed black one sticking out like a solitary violet in a bed of primroses. For, except in the cases of two sisters, or of a brother and sister, these black children never made friends among themselves, even to the extent of choosing seats side by side in assembly.

As is usually the case where all whites are freely admitted to the same institution, the Jewish children had, long before my time, become the majority. I do not know what policy the school would have adopted had there been enough children of wealthy Negroes in New York for them to follow

the example of their more fortunate minority brethren; but, fortunately for the open-to-all policy of the school, Negro children of means are rare. So, to maintain that policy, the school sent its teachers each year to comb Harlem for half a dozen of its nicest and brightest black pupils, and invited them to be transplanted on scholarships. Thus the school was never without its handful of Negroes.

I suppose that the effect upon the rest of us was, as it was intended to be, on the whole good. It must have taught us well-bred little boys and girls at the least the untruth of the common slander that Negroes have an unpleasant odor; for certainly none of the Johnsons and Whites and Washingtons in our school ever smelt of anything but soap. And we were brought up, through weekly ethics lessons and the influence of the inevitable elderly lady teacher who had never got Harriet Beecher Stowe out of her mind, to the axiom that all men were created equal.

The few scattered colored children in clean clothes, then, contributed

TESS SLESINGER published two books in the thirties, a collection of short stories and a novel, *The Unpossessed*. Later she went to Hollywood as a scenario writer. "*White on Black*" (Copyright, 1935, by Tess Slesinger; reprinted from *Time*: The Present by permission of Simon and Schuster) first appeared in THE AMERICAN MERCURY for December 1930.

practically to our liberal education. But what effect we, in our more than clean, our often luxurious clothes and with our pink and white faces, had in turn upon them, it is impossible for one of us to judge. Although I can tell you today what has happened since to a number of my old schoolmates, even to those in whom I have long ceased to be interested, and although I run every year across gossip concerning still others, none of us has any idea what happened to our colored classmates. Some of them left school before the high-school years were over; some of them were graduated and stood at our elbows with their rolled-up diplomas; but all of them have equally dropped out of our common knowledge since. Where are they now? Did they drift back to Harlem, those Johnsons and Washingtons and Whites? How do they now look upon their ten years' interlude with white children? I cannot imagine. But I remember vividly the school careers of the two who were in my class.

II

The Jacksons, brother and sister, joined us in the sixth grade. Solomon was formed like a small bronze god, his face perfectly chiseled and without fault; a pair of delicately dilated nostrils at the end of a short fine nose, and an aureole of dim black curls. Elizabeth was bigger, coarser, more Negroid; darker, her lips were thick, her nose less perfect; but still she was a beautiful child, luxuriously made, and

promising to develop into a refined type of the voluptuous Negro woman at her best. Elizabeth was older than Sol; but her brain, like her nose, was less sharp, and both were put into the same class.

For the first week or two our kind teachers paid them the surplus attention which was always extended to Negro, or crippled, or poverty-stricken children. They suggested that Sol be chosen when the boys were choosing up sides; they asked the girls to take Elizabeth as partner. The children stood off from them no more than they stood off from any newcomers. We were not adultly snobbish; we merely glared at all newcomers in our world until they should prove themselves worthy. But by the end of the month, there was no longer any question of choosing Sol: Sol himself was the chooser and the permanently chosen; likewise Elizabeth was besieged with requests for the seats on either side of her in assembly, and it became an honor to have a seat in the same row; and the teachers turned round, and were given rather to suppressing the colored Jacksons than to bringing them out.

For after a certain natural humility had worn off, Sol and Elizabeth were not merely taken into the group; they took over the group. Including the faculty. They were a smashing success. For one thing, they feared nothing; furthermore, they proved marvelous athletes; and they were born leaders. Electing Sol to the captaincy of the basketball team was a mere formality;

even if he hadn't richly deserved it, he would have permitted no one else to have held it. Elizabeth was as strong as a horse, less skillful, less graceful than he, but easily outshining, by her animal strength and fearlessness, all the white girls in the class. Beside their athletic prowess, which alone would have won them popularity in a class of eleven-year-olds, both of them were gifted with an overpowering jubility and a triumphant bullying wit, which inevitably made them czars.

They ruled the class with a rod of iron, chose their intimates, played with them, dropped them, and patronized the teachers. Their power spread to politics; by the end of the first year Sol was president of the class, and Elizabeth, who could not spell, secretary. Their class-meetings were masterpieces of irreverent wit and bedlam, subtly dominated by the tacitly authoritative Sol. The teachers turned over to them the difficult business of controlling the class after recess, and Sol, in his double capacity of legal president and illegal czar, easily succeeded where they had long failed. Even his sister, who was no small power among the girls, feared and adored him. If her authority was for one moment questioned, she had only to say, "I'll call Sol. . . ."

I remember myself—and probably not a few others of the dazzled little white girls did the same in secret—going home to dream about marrying Sol and taking Elizabeth to live with us. I remember a moment of

certainly unprecedented and of almost unsurpassed voluptuous pleasure on an occasion when Sol, twisting his wiry body into one of those marvelous knots from which he unrolled himself to shoot a basket, stretched so far that his shirt left his trousers and revealed a few inches of coffee-colored skin glistening with sweat, which caused me to gasp with delight. We girls chose to play against the boys of the class rather than among ourselves, and I was surely not the only girl who had voted favorably for the pure delight of being tossed on the ground and swung round the hips by the jubilant Sol, who had, beside his lovely body and fierce little nostrils, not the slightest inhibition.

For two years the noisy Jacksons demoralized the entire class into a raucous group that was never tired of wrestling, playing basketball, shouting jokes, and merrily defying the teachers. Not even the famous Seventh Grade Trouble, which involved the Jacksons as central figures, subdued them. Not even the visit, upon that terrifying occasion, of their mother. All of us made a point of walking past the principal's office to view Mrs. Jackson, who sat there, dressed in black and with her face held low and ashamed as though she were the culprit herself. We whispered afterward, among ourselves, of what a lady Mrs. Jackson was; we had never before seen a colored lady.

The high-school years loomed ahead. We were to be joined by another section of the same grade, and

we were determined to maintain our solidarity with Sol at our head. Our reputation as a champion class had preceded us; but with it, we soon noticed, a reputation for rowdiness. Sol was instantly elected captain of the basketball team. But he was just nosed out of the presidency by a white boy belonging to the other section, who must have gained some treacherous votes from among our own. Although the other boy occupied the chair, Sol managed, for half a year, to bully even the new section into slowly waning submission to the last echoes of his power.

Elizabeth's popularity remained limited to the girls in our own old section. The others adopted her at first as a novelty, but they had not been trained to her loud hearty jokes and her powerful wrestling, and soon tired of her and left her to her old companions. These dwindled slowly, as we girls gained consciousness of our status as girls and wished to dissociate ourselves from anything rowdy. Of course it was our fault — we could have pushed Elizabeth forward and remained loyal to her — but we had so many things to think of in those days. And I think something of the sort was bound to happen to Elizabeth anyway; she did not have the native personality to warrant and sustain the unlimited popularity which had fallen on her partly because of her strength and partly because she was her brother's sister. There was a quiet girl in our class, less mature than the rest of us — who were, in that first year of

high school, more fiercely mature than some of us are today, which is ten years after. This girl, Diana, fastened upon Elizabeth as a chum, and from now on the curious pair were inseparable.

I remember the early days when it became the thing for the boys to take the girls to the corner soda-store after basketball games, and for each boy to treat one girl to a fudge sundae. We couldn't help noticing that the boys, so eager to rough-house with Elizabeth in the classroom, hesitated among themselves as to which should treat her, and that the same one never treated her twice. We noticed too, that the soda-clerk stared at the dark blemish in our small white group. Elizabeth never seemed to notice anything; she developed a habit of kidding the soda-clerk in a loud professional voice, and soon our indignation was shifted to her, and we told her to lower her voice and not fool around with soda-clerks. Toward the end of the year, Diana and Elizabeth dissociated themselves from our group, and began to occupy a little table by themselves in a corner. Here they would sit and pretend to be alone, and we could hear them giggling and whispering happily. Sol, of course, was still too young and too "manly" ever to join these parties.

III

In the course of that first year in high school, many things beside the soda-parties happened to us. Wrestling between boys and girls was outlawed,

the girls began to loop their hair in buns over the ears, and the boys began to appear in navy-blue long trousers.

I remember Sol in his first longies. Instead of navy-blue, he appeared in a sleek suit of light Broadway tan, nicely nipped in at the waist, which harmonized with his clear mocha skin and showed off his dapper little figure to perfection. But it didn't quite fit in our school. I noticed that day, standing in line behind him to buy lunch tickets, that he wore brand new shoes: they were long and very pointed, and polished a brilliant ochre; they were button shoes, with cloth tops; they squeaked like nothing else in the world. I remember staring at them, and wondering where I had seen shoes like those before: was it in the elevator at home?

We were so grown-up that year that instead of shooting baskets in the twenty-minute recess that followed lunch, we got one girl to play the piano and the rest of us danced. Only about half of the boys were bold enough to dance; Sol still belonged to the group which stood in a corner and laughed and imitated their bolder friends, waiting for younger girls to be imported into the high-school department next year. With one boy to every pair of girls, it was not surprising that Elizabeth danced more than half of her dances with her friend Diana. The rest of us paired off with our girl-friends equally often.

But for no reason that anyone could see, Elizabeth's friends still diminished

week by week. She had occasional spurts of her old popularity, but these were chiefly occasioned by reaction against some more stable idol, who would soon be restored to her post. Elizabeth's one permanent friend was Diana, the quiet little blonde girl who had no other friends. As far as I know, Diana was the only girl who ever invited Elizabeth to her house, and it was rumored that Diana was the only one who had seen the inside of the Jackson house, but Diana could be made neither to say whether it was true, nor what it was like if she had seen it. As for the rest of us, we were a little uncomfortable about omitting Elizabeth at afternoon parties at our homes; but somebody's mother settled it for us by saying that she thought it would be an unkindness to the little colored girl to invite her to a home where there would be none of her own people. This conflicted, of course, with the lesson of our ethics classes, but we were thirteen-going-on-fourteen, and we had too much to think about, so we let it go at that.

Meanwhile Sol, who had remained captain all the first year, failed to be elected for the second. Some of his classmates started propaganda to the effect that, while still their best player, he was no good as a captain, and they self-righteously elected the second-best player in his stead. Sol took out his anger in refusing to cooperate with the team, and developed into a poor sport, that worst of anathemas in school, successfully hogging the ball so that no one else had a

chance. The epithet poor sport began to be whispered about the classroom, and when class elections for the second year were held, Sol was not even nominated for an office. Our section had sworn to stand by him when we had suffered defeat at the beginning of the year, but when the time came we simply sat and held our tongues, and elected another boy from the hostile section.

When the Jacksons returned for the second year after vacation, they looked a little different to us. Solomon had turned into something resembling an uptown beau, and Elizabeth's face had grown coarser. Elizabeth joined her friend Diana at once, and their companionship remained unbroken. Sol, however, held in considerably less esteem, remained aloof, making no effort to regain his lost popularity, and pursued his way sullenly and almost defiantly among us. He met our reproaches with indifference.

That year evening dances broke out among us. For the sake of girls who might never be asked, there was a rule that everyone must come unescorted and unescorting. It was easy enough, of course, to break the rule. Most of the girls came regularly attended by boys from the upper classes. Elizabeth came the first few times with her brother, which was as good as coming unattended. Sol stood in a corner with the stags; Elizabeth sat with the other girls who had come unattended or attended by brothers, looking very dark and strange in her short-sleeved light dress, and accepted gratefully

her few opportunities to dance.

There began to be whispers among us of what we would do if Sol asked one of us to come to a dance with him, or offered a treat to a soda. We admitted to feeling uncomfortable at the thought of being seen on the street with him. At the same time we realized that what we were contemplating was horribly unfair. But Evelyn — Evelyn who led our class in social matters because at fourteen she wore a brassière and baby French heels — said, "School is school; it's not the World; it's not our Real Lives," and we let it go at that. As we had tacitly adopted policies toward Elizabeth, we now officially adopted one toward Solomon; we were to be extra nice to him, but not in the way that one treats a boy; and we were to dance with him when he asked us, but to very kindly refuse his invitations to escort us anywhere outside the school walls. Fortunately for our peace of mind, ethics lessons were that year changed to weekly lessons in elocution for the girls, and public speaking for the boys.

But none of us was given the chance to refuse him. So far as I know, he never asked a girl to go anywhere with him, never left the stag-line at our Friday night dances, and after the first half-dozen, he never even came with Elizabeth. He scrupulously avoided even the careless physical contacts in the elevator, of which the other boys took modest advantage. Also, when we followed our policy of being nice to him in school, we found

ourselves politely ignored. Sol grew increasingly sullen, even occasionally rude, and one girl reported that he had passed her on the street and pretended not to see her, neglecting to lift his elegant tan felt hat.

In the middle of that year Elizabeth's friend Diana was withdrawn from the school by her parents and sent to a boarding-school in the South, rumor said to get her away from the black girl and teach her a proper sense of color.

With her friend gone, Elizabeth picked up smaller fry and dazzled them, because, unlike Sol, she seemed never to want to be alone. But even with these she learned to disappear at the school door, or at most to walk no further with a white classmate than the end of the school block. There, making some excuse about having to hurry, or going in another direction, she would dash away with a good-humored smile. I remember watching her running away from us once and wondering to what strange world she disappeared every day after school.

Of course, not one of the nice girls in our school would have dreamed of hurting Elizabeth's feelings by suggesting that she leave them on the street, but there must have been some hesitating on the corner before Elizabeth so effectively learned that her position with her white schoolmates ended with the school door. Or could it have been that dark lady, who had sat in the principal's office with her head lowered as though she were the culprit, that time of the Seventh

Grade Trouble? But no matter, we were in our third year of high school now, and had forgotten the seventh grade as we had forgotten the famous trouble, and were used now to seeing our dark classmate hurry off after school and run down the long block, leaving us standing on the corner, discussing our this and that, which was so awfully important to us. . . .

In the third year of high school, Sol simply did not appear. We were, I suppose, faintly relieved, in so far as we thought about him at all. He removed, after all, such uncomfortable questions as playing other schools with a Negro on our first team. And our own old section, our merry, rowdy section, of which Sol had once been undisputed king, had imperceptibly melted away, the boundary line was wavery, our old loyalty vague, a thing of the past; Sol, so far as he was anything in our minds, was a memory belonging to our lost section. When we asked Elizabeth what had happened to him, she told us he was going to another school because he didn't like girls and considered our private school sissy. She carried it off rather well, I think. One or two of us suggested that he might have been fired, because we all knew that his work had gone off badly in that last year.

Elizabeth herself, in those last two years, toned down considerably. Her prowess in studies had never been great, and she seemed now to be devoting more time to them. Her athletic ability had not lived up to its promise, because she had been after

all primarily interested in rough-neck play, and seemed unable or unwilling to tame her strength and spirits into rules and skill. She abandoned the bright colors she had worn as a child, and came to school in neat and modest dresses. She dropped without reluctance into the common order of students, learned to toady as she had once been toadied to, and managed to keep up a decent sober reputation which ensured her a mild amount of companionship, restricted, of course, to within the school walls. On committees Elizabeth volunteered for unpleasant jobs and carried them out cheerfully and efficiently. She grew generous and sweet-tempered, and a little like a servant; and like a servant, she was thanked for her services and forgotten. But Sol had dropped out of our existence.

IV

The last time I saw either of them was at our graduation dance. Elizabeth had long ago given up coming alone to our dances, but she came, of course, to this one, looking rather too burly and black in the prescribed white dress, with bare arms which hung like bones from her ungainly shoulders. She was the whole of the committee on refreshments, and all during the first part of the evening she stood behind a table with her diploma tucked on a rack over her head — nobody from her family had come to see her be graduated — and cheerfully dispensed sandwiches and ice cream.

Everybody was mingling proudly

in the big assembly room, waiting for the chairs to be removed for dancing; everybody was very nice to Elizabeth and even took down her address as a matter of form, but in the rush of taking addresses that really meant something and comparing notes about future colleges, she was forgotten, and if it hadn't been for a teacher who came to her rescue, she might have been completely alone. When the dancing began, the teacher led her away from the buffet table with her arm around her, to bring her to the row of chairs where girls sat waiting for partners.

Some of us must have had compunctions — I know I did — floating by her in our partners' arms, for on that night the least popular girl had achieved a faithful escort, if only by importing boys from classes below who felt it an honor to be there at all. But none of us felt badly enough to urge our partners to leave us and dance with Elizabeth. Later one or two boys danced a waltz with her, because a waltz was the least difficult to sacrifice. She sat all evening and talked cheerfully to the teacher. She looked uncomplaining, as though she had quietly learned her place. She even seemed to enjoy watching the rest of us dance.

The evening broke up on a high note of "See you again," "Don't forget," and "Oh, the most marvelous time!" and I remember emerging from the dance-room in a fever of happiness, walking on winged feet. I pushed my way through the gay

crowd outside the door. Somebody tapped me on the arm: "Miss!" I turned and saw, for the first time in three years, Solomon Jackson, the king of our old section! I smiled eagerly, delighted to see him again. "Why, Sol!" I exclaimed, holding out my hand.

He was as beautiful as he had been three years before, but his face was different, hardened perhaps, so that the dapper tan clothes he wore made him cheap and flashy. He still wore pointed button shoes with cloth tops. He was standing by the wall with his hat pulled down over his eyes. "Why, Sol!" I said.

He looked up, caught my eye, and shifted his away as though he had failed to recognize me. He looked down at the floor and spoke in a low

voice. "Miss, would you mind finding my sister Elizabeth Jackson inside and say her brother is waiting for her?" He stuck his hands suddenly into his pockets with something of his old sullen gesture.

I remember turning from him with an overpowering sense of guilt to spare him embarrassment, and going back with tears burning my eyes to find Elizabeth. I left him standing there against the wall, with his hat over his eyes, snubbing his former classmates, while they passed their former god and leader, some of them too happy to distinguish his features under that hat, others no doubt turning from him to prevent his embarrassment, and even, on that happy night, to spare themselves. . . . This should have been his graduation.

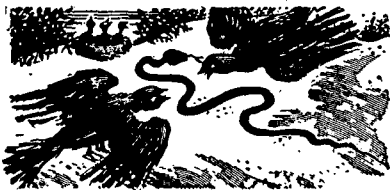
LOCAL ITEM

BY CHARLES ANGOFF

He wanted to be like Keats.
To make sure, he married one
Who wanted to be like
Elizabeth Barrett Browning.
Season followed season decorously.
He became a solid citizen,
Respected, responsible, reasonable;
And she joined the Progressive Club.
One night, with the radio
Playing Schubert,
They shot each other.
The police investigated carefully
And called it a mystery.

DOWN TO EARTH

by ALAN DEVOE



THE AMERICAN NATURE CREDO

A FEW years ago the Messrs. H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan used periodically to amuse themselves and the readers of this magazine by publishing installments of what they called "The American Credo." The articles of this Credo, as no long-time reader of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* can need to be reminded, were those multitudinous notions which, lacking any foundation in fact or justification in logic, nevertheless have persisted in our popular belief with such hardihood as to constitute a considerable part of the idea-content of the general mind.

The articles of the American Credo were such articles as that Irish-Americans habitually interject in their speech the exclamation "Begorra!"; or that Negroes are mysteriously endowed to maintain a sunny carefreeness under whatever adversity; or that persons whose eyes are close together are invariably untrustworthy, whereas persons with unusually wide-

spaced eyes can be counted on to possess the innocence of Adam before the Fall.

In few departments of the life-experience can there be a richer stock of false beliefs and tenaciously cherished myths than in natural history. Mr. Mencken and Mr. Nathan used sometimes to touch upon them. More recently Dr. Bergen Evans, pursuing his duties as the devoted skeptic in this magazine, has from time to time given his acid attention to some of them. It seems time for a full compendium of them to be presented here in "Down to Earth." They have been accumulating on this desk, now, for something like a decade . . . brought by the letters of readers, encountered in the press, and variously otherwise revealed as persistent in what popularly passes for nature-lore.

Here, then, are the 25 chief articles of that subdivision of The American Credo which may be called The American Nature-Credo. It is not an exhaustive presentation; there are many, many other articles. But these are the ones that have proven them-

selves hardest and most general, lodged not merely in the body-of-belief of the incurably stupid and ill-educated but also in the informational equipment, apparently, of the otherwise modern-minded and well-advised.

II

It is of faith, in the Nature Credo:

(1) That the bravest and strongest of the birds is the eagle, which is peculiarly suited by its courage and fairness of spirit to represent America as the country's national emblem.

(2) That the common house cat, when it suffers a fall from a height, has the curious gift of invariably landing on its feet and suffering no injury, however enormous the distance of the drop.

(3) That the rabbit and the deer are characterized by remarkably gentle natures, and may suitably stand as symbols of fragile delicacy and harmlessness.

(4) That immunity to the poison of poison ivy may be acquired by eating a leaf of that plant; but that, when a case of ivy poisoning has indeed been contracted, it may effectively be treated by the application of gasoline.

(5) That the vulture has a psychic sensitivity which enables it to detect, from the upper air, those animals and/or people who are *going* to be struck down by death; and that the circling overhead of a vulture or vultures is therefore to be taken as a darkly ominous sign.

(6) That if young mockingbirds are captured and caged, their mother will seek them out and feed them poisonous berries through the bars, preferring to see them dead rather than deprived of their birthright of wild freedom. (This article has lately received the incalculable support of citation by Walter Winchell.)

(7) That a blinded rat or mouse is enabled still to undertake the difficult enterprises of rodent life by seizing in its mouth a stick, the ends of which are grasped by two of its fellows who can see, and who guide the sightless one upon its rounds, in the manner of Seeing Eye dogs.

(8) That the carcass of a killed rattlesnake, if left at the scene of the death, must thereafter be approached with the greatest circumspection, for the deceased reptile's mate will have sought out the corpse and coiled cunningly and revengefully beside it.

(9) That the beaver is enabled to fell trees in the direction it desires because it waits until the wind is in precisely the correct quarter.

(10) That when traveling squirrels come to a body of water too wide to swim across, they embark on leaves and chips of wood which they employ as rafts, and hold their bushy tails up in the air so that they serve as sails.

(11) That crows regularly hold avian courts of justice, to pass judgment upon those members of the flock which may have committed offenses under the terms of feathered society; and that the crow on trial, if adjudged guilty, is sentenced to execution and

thereupon summarily beaten and pecked to death.

(12) That wild animals have a gift or instinct for recognizing when a female of their kind is pregnant; and that they thereupon at once begin treating her with gentleness, protectiveness, and tact.

(13) That the mole has fixed working hours, which it observes as rigorously as a labor union; and that these hours are always the same every day.

(14) That certain snakes inject their venom by using a sting located at the tip of the tail.

(15) That fish propel themselves through the water by paddling with their fins, in the manner of the propulsion of a rowboat.

(16) That the severity of an approaching winter is accurately indicated by the thickness of the fur grown by animals in the autumn.

(17) That animals are extremely susceptible to the power of the human eye; and that even the angriest or most recalcitrant beast may be subdued by a penetrating, steady, and masterful gaze.

(18) That the age of a rattlesnake in years is the same as the number of its rattles.

(19) That the elephant is notable for a hysterical terror of mice, which it fears will run up its trunk and into the vital areas of the brain; that the elephant has a prodigiously long and accurate memory, particularly for injuries and insults; that, appropriately for an animal so enormous, it lives to a very great age, frequently centuries;

and that when at last it does feel death approaching — (like all wild animals it has a psychic precognition) — it makes its way to a secret elephant graveyard.

(20) That the dog has a strange sense or instinct whereby it can distinguish, beneath however deceptive a human exterior, the trustworthiness or criminality of the inhabiting personality; and that a man to whom a dog shows otherwise unaccountable aversion may thus legitimately be guessed to be a scoundrel.

(21) That the prairie dog, the burrowing owl, and the rattlesnake, all dwelling together in the same den in the ground, have an unspoken but unbreakable understanding amongst them whereby none ever does the others any harm.

(22) That if a skunk is held by the tail it is rendered incapable of loosing its stench.

(23) That the blacksnake and the rattlesnake are never found co-inhabiting the same area of the countryside, for the former is the dedicated and relentless enemy of the latter and extirpates it from its range.

(24) That the fox, though extremely cunning in confusing its trail when pursued, has the fatally unalterable habit of always running in a circle.

(25) That if an egg be stolen from the nest of a turkey or a stork (or any of several other large birds) and an egg of some other species substituted, the hatching of the substitute egg will cause the male parent bird — when

he sees this odd and alien youngster — to suspect his mate of infidelity; and that he will call a council of his fellow storks or turkeys to pronounce sentence upon her, the sentence commonly being death.

III

It has been urged a good many times in this section of the *MERCURY* that it is as unwise as it is uncharitable to make too easy fun of many of the fragments of nature-lore that are cherished in popular belief. Every now and then some old folk-notion, some antique piece of backwoods legend never previously thought worthy even of investigation by science, has a disconcerting way of turning out to have some truth in it. But the articles of *The Nature Credo* are not like that.

It is the peculiar glory of nearly all of them that they are not merely untrue, but that they have the sort of untruth that is readily discoverable by *any* degree of investigation, even the most simple layman's, even a child's. Ten minutes' walk in any snake-populated countryside can disclose rattlesnakes and blacksnakes on the same acre. The uncountable annual deaths of pet cats that have fallen off ridgepoles and been smashed to pulp make instantly apparent the absurdity of the notion about cats' eerie gift for always landing unharmed on their feet. No one could watch a mole for as much as two days and still believe the work-schedule story. No one could watch a fish swimming for more than a few mo-

ments and retain the credo-theory about the method of fish propulsion. One solitary experiment with a stork-egg would be ample to ruin the moral folk-tale that has been flourishing so long.

There is a kind of special splendor about pure nonsense. There is also a kind of special strength. If any article of the *Nature Credo* had some little element of rationality in it, it might be rationally attacked and done away with. But the articles are pure faith, pure magic; and they are given thereby a sort of preposterous unsailability. If there were even *one* species of snake possessing a sting in its tail, it might be possible to popularize the fact that no other species of snake is equipped in that spectacular way. But since *no* snake, anywhere in all snakedom, has a sting in its tail, the belief in the sting-tail snake becomes, in an unearthly way, invincible.

Scientists are frequently maddened by the persistence of the articles of *The American Nature Credo*. They sputter and snort and wave their arms and write exasperated letters to the press. It is in vain, and likely to continue so. It is not, perhaps, the right way in which to regard the *Credo*. The *Credo* should be regarded, perhaps, and cherished, just as a kind of glorious monument to the strength and shimmer of our inveterate human foolishness, in a world only too wearisomely beset, as it sometimes seems, by the accurate, the exact, and the true.

CHICAGO: THE BIG JUNCTION

BY STEWART H. HOLBROOK

THERE is no other city in the United States so obviously the creation of railroads as Chicago. Whether one arrives by plane, train, bus, boat, or even on foot, the fact of the railroad is at once apparent. It isn't locomotive smoke alone that tells the visitor he has reached the great center of the rails. The whole atmosphere of the town is that of a gigantic railroad junction — brisk and hurried, with the special hurry that is nervous and staccato, the kind of hurry one thinks of in relation to changing cars, of downing a doughnut and a cup of coffee between trains, while the station announcer waits, watch in hand, to call the next train for Boston, New Orleans, Houston, Seattle, and all way points.

No other city on earth has so many great railroad stations as Chicago. Step out of any Loop hotel for a stroll in any direction and you will come across railroad depots of all sorts of architecture. There is the old Dearborn Street station, with its gigantic shed, the whole affair hideous and quite dirty, breeding nostalgia for the days when all locomotives had diamond stacks and conductors wore immense mustaches and cutaway coats. There is the rather severe Union Station, broodhouse of two transconti-

nentials, with a bookstore for literates and a fine Harvey eating room. There is the imposing Chicago & North Western with its ramps leading to the glossy and towering *Daily News* building beside the river; the comparatively remote Illinois Central facing the Field Museum, and the Randolph Street station of the Chicago, South Shore & South Bend, a place of catacombs and subterranean life; and two others, the LaSalle Street and the copycat-named Grand Central, which is neither grand nor central. Each depot has a flavor of its own, each is quite wonderful with the sights, the smells and the sounds inherent in the most exciting places Americans have ever built.

Unquestionably it is the many railroads and their stations that go to make Chicago so exciting a city, for railroad stations are alive, throbbing, dynamic, charged with the urgency of life. Airports, even the largest, are dull indeed compared to a steamcar depot; and bus stations are no better. For one thing they don't smell right; there is no excitement in the fumes of gasoline, even the high-test kind. When and if the railroads go wholly over to diesel operation, then railroad stations will lose much in the coal gases that always reminded the trav-

eler of far places beyond the city limits. For another thing, diesels don't sound right, for the snorting of motors contains none of the magic of a locomotive with its nervous breathing; nor is the bray of an air horn any substitute for the sheer melody of steam through a reed or the music of hammer on brass. And finally, at least to my mind, the sleekest plane ever made and the shiniest bus on the road are dismally dull objects compared to a locomotive drowsing at the head end of a long string of passenger coaches.

Little wonder that Chicago and its galaxy of depots stands alone as the champion railroad junction of the country, and hence America's most exciting city. It is in Chicago and nowhere else that the man from any corner of the Republic sees indications of roads he never rode on and perhaps never heard of. These are strange engines in the yards or pounding into or out of town, their tenders carrying legends unknown in Maine or Florida or Oregon. Watch a bit and you'll see the Monon Route, the Alton, the Santa Fe, the Baltimore & Ohio, the Wabash, the Corn Belt, the Pere Marquette, the Soo Line, the Nickel Plate, the Chicago, Aurora & Elgin, and others more likely familiar.

Unsuspected to the common traveler is an underground Chicago of railroads, sixty-two miles of track beneath the city (not subways), much of it 40 feet down. This is the Chicago Tunnel Railway, and over its tracks 150 electric locomotives and more

than 3000 cars deliver coal and other freight to the basements of Loop buildings, and take away ashes and more freight. Then, the Chicago switching district embraces an area a little larger than Rhode Island, and contains nearly 8000 miles of track. Some 600 freight trains leave this district every day, Sundays included.

II

A stranger might wonder how Chicago came to be such a center of the rails. The answer in one word, of course, is location. Yet, Chicago might not have become a tremendous railroad town so soon had it not been for a prophet and genius of the first mark. He was William Butler Ogden, the first really great American railroad man, born in 1805 in Delaware County, N. Y., and now forgotten.

Ogden arrived in Chicago in 1835, and although the next decade was to see him make a small fortune out of real estate and another because he had loaned Cyrus McCormick \$25,000 to make some kind of a reaping machine, his great contribution was his interest in and ability with railroads. Off and on for ten years he discussed with other Chicago businessmen the idea of building a railroad from that city into the West, perhaps even to the Mississippi river. They were not interested. Chicago's leaders believed that their prosperity rested solely on Great Lakes shipping, plus the network of plank roads that had been built out from the city in all directions.

The plank roads idea seemed to almost everybody but Ogden to be the highway direct to Chicago's certain and glittering future. These roads were planks nailed to timbers on the ground. By the beginning of 1848 an average of 200 big wagons daily bumped into town, and the road companies were rolling in wealth from the tolls. The shrewdest minds in the city held that the plank road constituted a revolution in transportation and that Chicago was growing great and wealthy because the plank-road spokes of her wheel ran north and south and west.

The plank roads developed professional teamsters, rough lads skilled in hogging the planks and crowding non-professional drivers off into the prairie mud. But many a farmer drove his own team into town, and the business grew so famously that Chicago set up a municipal camp for them on the lake shore at the foot of Randolph Street. This great traffic was good for Chicago merchants, hotel keepers and parasites. Whores carrying red lanterns prowled the vast tent camp at night. Gamblers came, too, and pick-pockets, bunco-steerers and assorted thugs. Somehow, because of legitimate business or through vice and thievery, every farmer and teamster managed to leave a good deal of cash in Chicago.

Thus Ogden could find little encouragement for his idea of a railroad. To quiet his continuous babble, Chicago's merchants at last told him a railroad would be the ruination of the

city. It was a retail town, they said, and the farmers must come to town to trade. If they could ship their produce on a railroad, they would not come to the city at all. Other towns would grow up along the rails, too, and farmers would trade at the place nearest home. No, it wouldn't do. Everyone, or nearly everyone, was getting rich as it was. Conditions must not be disturbed.

Ogden, as sharp and dynamic a character as ever went into the West, decided to leave his fellow citizens to their smug ideas of prosperity and plank roads. He took his cause direct to the farmers who lived out along the planks. With horse and buggy he drove across the flatlands to stop at every farm house and talk about the Galena & Chicago Union railroad, a moribund corporation he had revived for the sake of its charter, and to learn how they felt about a railroad. They felt pretty good about a railroad. Ogden next called meetings in log schoolhouses and barns for the purpose of selling stock. The farmers bought, taking the cash out of sugar bowls and mattresses to pay a little down on a share. Within a short time Ogden had some \$250,000 on his subscription books. Now he hired a gang of men and went to work at construction.

Chicago still didn't want a railroad cluttering up its waterfront and plank roads. Its merchants and boss pimps defeated an ordinance which would have permitted the Galena & Chicago Union to have a depot within the city

limits. Nevertheless, building and equipping the Galena went ahead. The rails, the locomotives, the cars, everything was second-hand, but workable. In November of 1848 Ogden and his board of directors rode out to the end of the line on the banks of the Des Plaines river, almost ten miles, and returned with a carload of wheat — the first of a host of such carloads. Within a week Chicago's drowsing merchants were startled to learn that no less than thirty carloads more of grain were at the Des Plaines depot, waiting the little Galena's freight train. They quickly killed their anti-railroad-depot ordinance; of a sudden it occurred to them that henceforth they could sell not only to Chicagoans and nearby farmers but to all the Northwest. They began to see the vision which Ogden had been holding before their eyes for a decade past. It looked bright, now.

The first year of operation showed the railroad to have earned better than \$2000 a month. Farmers along the line were elated with their first dividend checks. Ogden was running the road well. He drove the rails still westward, then north until they came in contact with the Madison & Beloit, in Wisconsin. Ogden took over this line, extended it, and a bit later reorganized his roads into the Chicago & North Western. During the next decade he built the C & NW into a mighty system, and also served as president of the Union Pacific, and had a hand in the Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne & Chicago.

As soon as Ogden had shown the dullard Chicago merchants that a railroad could do more for them than any number of plank roads, they rejoiced and called him a great man. His startling success had become known in the eastern centers of capital which until then would not listen to ideas about railroads west of the Lakes. The Illinois Central, supported by New York and Boston capital, started building from one end of the state to the other. From Michigan the two lines called the Central and the Southern started reaching for Chicago, financed from New England.

With the new capital came John Murray Forbes of Boston, probably the only industrialist that Mr. Emerson of Concord ever called "a superior man." Forbes took hold of the Michigan Central and drove its rails into Chicago, then bought a little bankrupt known as the Aurora Branch, picked up other two-by-fours, and by 1855 had arrived at the banks of the Mississippi, ready to name his system the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy, and to push it on to reach Omaha.

III

William Butler Ogden had shown the way, and now the rush was on. Henry Farnum and others, in less than two years, built 180 miles of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific, put the first railroad bridge across the Mississippi, bought up a number of small lines, and induced Ogden to become one of their officials. The Chicago & Al-

ton, completed in 1854, got through to the city on the lake by connecting with the Rock Island at Joliet. Down in Springfield, a small group of zealots, fired by Ogden, purchased the bankrupt and haywire Northern Cross railroad, which had been built by the state of Illinois. Things went pretty well, and the road was continued across the state to Indiana where it met the Lake Erie, Wabash & St. Louis; then it built westward. These lines were soon merged into the Wabash system, with a track into Chicago.

Now came the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul, destined to have a depot and to start reaching for the Pacific Coast. Now came both the great Eastern roads, the New York Central and the Pennsylvania, wanting track-age into the giant of the west, and getting it. For fifty years, after Ogden showed the way, one or more railroad depots were in process of being built, rebuilt, or enlarged in Chicago; the work was never done, not even as recently as 1946. For the next fifty years after Ogden, too, this or that railroad was seeking entrance to the magic spot at the foot of Lake Michigan.

With every new line to touch it, the city's population took a new leap. Cyrus McCormick early saw it was to be a great railroad center. Armour, then Morris, then Swift picked Chicago as the proper place to get, kill, pack and ship hogs and cattle. Montgomery Ward thought he could sell things to farmers by mail and believed

that presently more mail trains would go out of Chicago in all different directions. He was right, too. A few years later George Mortimer Pullman saw the trend and moved his already huge industry from Detroit to a Chicago suburb which he modestly named Pullman.

And where, a few years before, Chicago had fought against construction of even one railroad depot, it now wanted every railroad in the United States to come and to build there its own depot and terminal facilities. A goodly number of them did build depots, and still use them today. Many and widely separated depots was a good thing for local business; and now came Frank Parmalee to build a little feed and livery stable into a mighty monopoly of transportation from depot to depot, to haul travelers by the million every year.

Parmalee arrived in Chicago, via the Great Lakes boats, from Genesee County, N. Y., where he had been born in 1816. His arrival was in 1853, and he started with a couple of teams to move travelers from dock to hotel or railroad station. He prospered with every new depot, and now he employed agents to board trains and boats heading for Chicago and there to advise passengers as to the best way to transfer. He must have chosen his men with care for they got the trade and held it through the years until the name of Parmalee and Chicago city transportation were synonymous. Frank Parmalee also set about to improve on the old coach-style of

horse drawn rigs. He and his son devised a rear loading type, with seats running lengthwise, and a baggage rack on top. These carriages were unique and distinctive, right down to the shade of green tint of their paint. To draw them he got the finest teams of horses that could be bought, and Parmalee knew his animals.

To top off this elegant equipage, the Parmalee drivers were not only excellent drivers and genial men, but they were clothed all alike in uniforms, swallow-tailed coats scintillating with two long rows of glittering buttons, striking helmet-hats on their heads. It all made for confidence in them from the public.

Parmalee kept a close eye on the railroads. He got to know their officials. When a new line entered Chicago, Parmalee was ready to have one of his pleasant agents get aboard the trains just outside the city in order to aid passengers in planning their moves from station to station. The agents knew all the answers, too. They were also dressed in uniforms and were an agreeable contrast to the bunco-steerers of various rackets who had been operating on travelers since earliest stagecoaching days. A Parmalee agent was known to be honest. He was instructed to advise the passenger in the passenger's best interest, even if Parmalee lost a fare in the business.

Frank Parmalee ran his business with a sure hand until 1903, when he sold out to a syndicate composed of Marshall Field, Frank Lowden and others. In 1921 the last of the Parma-

lee horses was sold, and the company completely motorized. For ninety years a major portion of travelers changing cars at The Big Junction have done so in Parmalee hacks or cabs.

Chicago prospered from the railroads in many ways, including and not incidentally from the fact that all travelers had to change cars — and usually stations — when they got there. No passenger trains ran *through* Chicago. A freight, well, why not? Freights carried no human beings, except for a few burns and hoboes who didn't count, hence there was no good reason to halt freight trains. But travelers spent money, just as the plank road teamsters had done in the days when the Galena & Chicago Union was the city's only railroad and not wanted at that. As the years passed, styles changed but basically Chicago remained the same and it built many hotels and gull-catching stores and saw to it that no traveler passed through Cook county without stopping to change cars, and stations, and to get a whiff of the bracing Lake air.

So the matter rested until 1946, when the Chesapeake & Ohio Railway Company came out with a startling proposal. In paid advertisements it said that 500,000 persons, whom with excellent psychology it termed "victims," had during 1945 been forced to make double Pullman reservations, pack and transfer their baggage, and wait around for connections, all because of this "phantom Chinese wall

which splits America in half." It offered to cooperate with any Western road to supply through service at Chicago.

The C & O went on to say that if the railroads were to continue prosperous they must acquire a new state of mind. At least two Western roads and two Eastern lines presently announced they were prepared to book Pullman passengers through Chicago without change. This may be a mere

gesture. Perhaps it means a new era for cross-country travelers. In any case, it looks to most laymen like a dent in the Railroad Mind. If so, then it is well, for the Railroad Mind, in mid-Twentieth Century, is a vastly complex affair compounded almost equally of daring and timidity, of quick intelligence and pigheadedness. At this late day, it will matter little to Chicago if it becomes a way-station instead of The Big Junction.

A FUGITIVE TEXT

BY MATTHEW BILLER

"The heart . . . who can know it?"

A man grows up in field and tower
In a pattern passed from father to child,
And the way of his life is the way of a flower . . .
But his heart is strange; his heart is wild.

He lives with the earth and knows its weather,
Its nations and customs East and West,
And he knows the wants that knit men together;
But his heart is a stranger in his breast.

O the heart of a man is lonely and deep!
And the gulfs therein he has never known,
For only the heart of a man can keep
The forgotten wisdom of flesh and bone —

The love of the cave, Eve's lullaby.
The maps of his mind are numbered and framed,
His feet are schooled to walk on the sky,
The books of his knowledge are published and named,
But his heart . . . his wild heart . . . keeps the wilderness cry.

MUSIC

by HOWARD L. GOODKIND



A NEW NORWEGIAN COMPOSER

SEVERAL weeks ago, an employee of the Royal Norwegian Information Service returned from Norway with the master recordings and published scores of two works by a composer named Harald Saeverud. Although Saeverud has been hailed in his mother country by Oslo's leading critics as the greatest living exponent of Norwegian music, for some inexplicable reason he has never been recognized in the United States. Not one of his works has ever been performed by an American orchestra and no critique of his music has appeared in an American journal. I was fortunate to be among the first in this country to hear Saeverud's music and I was impressed by the genuine skill of his craftsmanship. He has achieved

an originality of technique without resorting to any ear-catching, novel devices or unusual departures from the standard musical forms. Actually, it is an originality of mood more than anything else. His melancholy *Symphony of the Dead* is one of the most atmospherically depressing compositions I have ever heard. Despite the occasional suggestions of Sibelius and Wagner (Saeverud was partially trained in Germany), his music is stamped with a new style. It is the work of a man with deep convictions and warm passions, whose writings are an outlet for his personal emotions.

The discovery of musical talent is of vital concern to the world regardless of nationality, but in the case of Harald Saeverud it is especially significant. With the possible exception of Edvard Grieg and, to a lesser degree, Johan Severin Svensen,

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it is difficult to recall any Norwegian composers who may be ranked with the "greats" of continental Europe. What manner of man, therefore, is Harald Saeverud to have so distinguished himself in this seemingly sterile environment?

At fifty, an age when most men have already reached the peak of their productivity, Saeverud has only just begun to compose the kind of music that has captured the ear of the Norwegian people. For almost forty years he composed in his country home near Bergen on the North Sea in almost total obscurity. Except for a circle of close friends and admirers who were able to appreciate his music through their close association with the man himself, Saeverud was generally regarded as "too difficult and heavy for most listeners." His music was gloomy and pensive, and identified by introverted qualities that were the products of his sensitive personality. Audiences were left cold by his abstract excursions into nature and the soul.

With the coming of war to Europe and the occupation by the Germans of Norway, what had been abstract became concrete. Too old to work actively as a fighter for his country's cause, Saeverud nevertheless became the voice of his struggling people. His music suddenly became meaningful for Norwegians who, like the composer, had been transformed by the suffering of war. No longer were his works merely the expression of a profound personal philosophy.

The Kjempeviseslatten (*Dance of the Giants*) was one of the first Saeverud works to achieve recognition in Norway. A short but moving piece, it is dedicated to the workers of the underground movement. Its simple, stirring theme touched the heart of the Norwegian people and, within a brief time after its first performance, the *Dance of the Giants* was in great demand all over the country.

Audiences asked for more by the composer of *Kjempeviseslatten* and other works soon appeared, some of which had been composed earlier. Outstanding among these is the *Symphonia Dolorosa* (*Symphony of the Dead*). This symphony in one movement is dedicated to Saeverud's friend, Auden Lavik, a physician who fell at Trandum, where 140 Norwegians were shot by firing squads during the occupation. A more thoughtful and developed work than his shorter piece, it had less popular appeal. The concert-going public, however, was extremely enthusiastic, and Saeverud's reputation among the critics was secured.

The composer, a bit flabbergasted by this sudden rise to fame, continued to work feverishly. In the short period of four years, he produced between 30 and 40 new compositions, of which three are symphonies. The two major works which have not been mentioned are the *Salme Symphonium* (*The Hymn Symphony*), a work of hope, faith and thanksgiving, and the

Motstandsviljens Symphoni (Symphony of the Will to Resist).

Saeverud has been described as a frail man with sensitive, sad eyes and the fair hair that is characteristic of his people. The direct descendant of a Norse chieftain who lived in the Handanger district of Norway in the eleventh century, he values the musical limbs of his family tree more than its warlike roots. His family through the centuries has boasted many musicians and violin-makers. Saeverud's musical tendencies made themselves known early, and his first composition, a piece for the piano entitled *The Death of the Hen*, was completed when he was eight. He would sit for hours listening to the local villagers as they played folk tunes on their Harding fiddles (a Norwegian adaptation of the concert violin). The plaintive tones of this instrument inspired him to develop the folk songs into more permanent forms. He has since emphasized, however, that he used these melodies only as starting points and never as the basis of an entire composition. At nineteen he composed his first orchestral work, and since that time he has presented the world with five symphonies, a cello concerto, a series of orchestral variations and many minor compositions.

When he is not composing, he relaxes by quarrying stone, working in his fields or tending his goats. Saeverud feels that it is on the days that he works hardest that he is most receptive to the myriads of impressions that are everywhere waiting

to be transformed into music. It is his philosophy that at least part of every man's life should be spent sweating out the evil that is within him, and he believes that it is his deep appreciation of nature which has taught him the secret of simple, uninhibited musical expression. When asked to describe how his compositions develop, he has answered that his subconscious supplies him with his themes. Should a melody or idea interest him, he allows it to remain in his mind and grow as much as possible of its own accord. As he describes it himself:

Some seeds grow into a fruit, others possess qualities which will in time produce a tree. My first task is to feel my way ahead to the point where I can determine in which direction the phrase intends to grow. After I have guided the composition to that stage, most of my work is completed and from there on, it grows to full maturity by itself.

Several months ago, Saeverud was asked to compose a new score for the famous Ibsen drama *Peer Gynt*. At first he was taken aback by the scope of the project. He was wary of tackling an assignment that Grieg had completed so successfully many years before. But he was fifty years old, and he finally convinced himself that *Peer Gynt* was probably his last chance to be young again. He has described the "wild" thrill of interpreting *Anitra's Dance*, *The Hall of the Mountain King* and the other classic scenes from the tale. Many scholars have felt for years that Ibsen's work should be re-written in Neo-Norwegian, a language form that has developed for

the most part since Ibsen's death. The Saeverud music will be used as background for a new text in this modern dialect which is being prepared by one of Norway's foremost philologists. The opera is expected to be ready for production shortly, and the Director of the Norske Teatret in Oslo will play the title rôle. Saeverud has already made it clear that his music will in no way conflict with the Grieg score. This is entirely believable to anyone who has heard Saeverud's music. It is as different from that of Grieg as any two works in the same medium could possibly be.

III

The two compositions which have been brought to the United States as representative of Saeverud's work are the *Dance of the Giants* and the *Symphony of the Dead*. The first composition is actually a theme and variations, which employs the interesting device of instrumental variations rather than the usual variations of counterpoint, rhythm changes, etc. According to the criticisms of Norwegian journalists, this technique is one of Saeverud's favorites. In the *Dance of the Giants*, a martial theme is employed as the basic melody. It is an intricate but extremely infectious and inspiring tune, which is introduced in a quiet, modest fashion. Gradually it grows as each group of instruments picks it up, adding new color and strength to the total effect. The momentum increases until the work comes to a triumphant con-

clusion with a tremendous crescendo that employs all the power of the full orchestra. Within the brief span of approximately six minutes, Saeverud succeeds in developing an emotional climax that must indeed have moved his Norwegian audiences who, better than we, could appreciate what was behind its composition.

The *Symphony of the Dead* is, for the most part, formless. Even after carefully following the score, it is difficult to discover any regular pattern except for a recurring seven-note motif. This is understandable in view of Saeverud's avowed dependence upon random inspiration rather than planning and logical sequence. From beginning to end, the *Symphonia Dolorosa* is true to its title — morose, gloomy, sombre. For a brief moment near the conclusion, a tango beat is introduced, but even this customarily lively rhythm is presented in a minor key with a sad, woeful effect. (The device is similar to one used in Virgil Thomson's *Plough That Broke the Plains*.) Never once during the entire work does Saeverud cater to the more pollyanna members of his audience by reverting to a happier vein. It will be interesting to see whether a people which has not really suffered — such as the American people — will be as receptive to this mournful symphony as were the Norwegians.

I hesitate to classify Saeverud categorically on the basis of these two compositions alone. It would be as unwise as passing judgment on Sibelius after hearing only his obscure Fourth

Symphony. The general impression that I took away with me was favorable. Saeverud's most outstanding attribute is his masterly scoring. It is simple and direct, with every instrumental part handled carefully and with considerable skill. He has obviously, despite his allegiance to free and formless composition, devoted a great deal of time and study to the art of orchestration. His works certainly deserve frequent performance in this country. The printed scores of both compositions are now circulating among several of our leading conductors and, perhaps within the near future, Americans may be offered the opportunity to judge for themselves the compositions which have awakened Norwegian music from a half-century of slumber.

THE RECORD CABINET

JASCHA HEIFETZ has blazed a new trail for frustrated violinists. Dissatisfied with the confining bounds of solo work, he has made his debut as a duet. In the new Victor recording of the *Bach Concerto in D Major for Two Violins and Orchestra* [DM 1136, 2 records, \$3.00], Heifetz plays both violin parts. The Victor engineers in a frenzy of mechanical genius, have succeeded in superimposing one part over the other so perfectly that the listener is unaware of any chicanery behind the control board. It must be said at once that they have produced a fine recording, both mechanically and artistically, with a meticulous performance by Heifetz. The final side of the album has an annoying surface defect that prevents the violins from coming through clearly. The value of this device is doubtful. David Hall explains in the notes that accompany the album that it is extremely difficult to find "soloists who . . . possess not only well-matched tone quality

in the performance of their parts, but also the musicianship necessary to meet fully the challenge posed by this brilliant masterpiece. . . ." It is hard to believe that the artistic field has been narrowed down to such a degree.

*

For the first release under its new Metropolitan Opera contract, which provides for two complete operas a year, Columbia has chosen Engelbert Humperdinck's ever-popular *Hansel and Gretel* [MOP-26, 12 records, \$17.70]. Humperdinck's music, with its Wagner-like passages, has always been a favorite with opera companies, and it was a logical selection to start off the series. The dance-duet from the first act, as well as many of the other tuneful songs from the opera, are standing favorites in thousands of nurseries. The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and the six members of the cast have turned in enthusiastic and expert performances and both adults and children should find the set to their tastes. Among the singers, Rise Stevens and Nadine Connor as the two children, and John Brownlee as the father, are outstanding. It seems a shame to criticize Thelma Votipka's interpretation of the wicked witch who almost sends Hansel and Gretel to ginger-bread deaths, but her voice is much too charming and sweet to frighten many young opera fans. Perhaps the fault lies with Humperdinck for not including enough evil cackles in his score. It is obvious, in any event, that the Metropolitan has decided that it wouldn't be fair to ask a singer with a voice as fine as Miss Votipka's to make it sound like an uncoiled spring for the sake of better drama. The over-all mechanics of the recording are perfect and it will be interesting to see how Columbia handles a more challenging work from the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House in the future.

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Several years ago, Joseph Szigeti recorded Beethoven's Violin Concerto for Columbia with Bruno Walter conducting an unidentified orchestra [MM 177]. His performance at that time was better than average but the recording made it sound much worse. High notes were fuzzy and the entire concerto lacked tone-balance. In his new recording of the work for the same company, again accompanied by Bruno Walter, who this

time conducts the New York Philharmonic Orchestra [MM-697, 5 records, \$7.10], Szigeti has redeemed himself. His notes come out clear and sharp. His cadenzas are executed with assurance and great insight, never sacrificing tone for display. Mr. Walter handles the orchestral passages with his usual dependability. At last, Columbia has issued a recording of the Beethoven concerto that matches, and in many respects excels, the Victor recording by Heifetz. The choice between the two albums will be a difficult one for collectors who are in the market for this work.

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Arturo Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra have recorded for Victor the *Siegfried Idyll*, *A Faust Overture* and *The Ride of the Valkyries* [A Wagner Program, DM 1135, 4 records, \$5.00]. Perhaps it is because one has come to expect such a great deal from the renowned Italian conductor that this set seems disappointing. All of the works are played in an adequate but apathetic fashion, leaving nothing but the music itself to recommend the album. Of the three selections, the Faust Overture is the most rewarding because it is representative of a period in Wagner's life that is seldom included on most Wagnerian programs. The recording is only fair.

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Three new albums which were recorded recently in England have been released by Columbia. Two of them are Mozart works: the *Concerto #4 in E-Flat Major for Horn and Orchestra* [MX-285, 2 records, \$3.85] and the *Quintet for Clarinet and Strings in A-Major* [MM-702, 4 records, \$5.85]. The third set is another recording of *Tschaikowsky's Fifth Symphony* [MM-701, 6 records, \$8.35]; which brings the total of Columbia recordings of this work up to three.

The Mozart concerto is a delightful work. The horn, with its blustering, pompous tone is certainly not the best instrument for solo composition, but Mozart, who turned to gold everything he touched, succeeded in endowing it with a remarkably light touch. The Hallé Orchestra of Manchester with Dennis Brain as soloist has recorded the Concerto with delicacy and good taste. Brain's handling of the difficult instrument is superlative and his complicated runs are literally breathtaking. The Quintet,

while not as technically perfect as the horn album, is still a pleasant enough recording. Competently played by the Philharmonia String Quartet, its remarkable feature is the lovely, daintily modulated clarinet playing of Reginald Kell. Paul Kletsky and the Philharmonia Orchestra have produced one of the best recordings of *Tschaikowsky's Fifth Symphony* that has been released. It is to be hoped that we shall be hearing more from this English combination.

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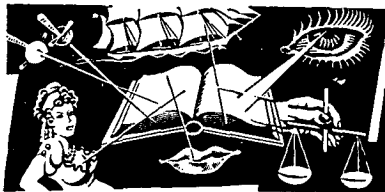
It is probably a mere coincidence that the Columbia recording of *Bach's Suite #2 for Flute and Strings* [MM-695, 3 records, \$4.60] should come so close on the heels of the Koussevitsky recording of the same work for Victor [see this department in the November AMERICAN MERCURY]. Fritz Reiner and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra have done an admirable job with the Suite and the mechanical features of the album are even better than in the Koussevitsky recording. The microphones seem to have been more wisely placed in the Reiner performance and the flute playing of Sebastian Caratelli sounds purer and clearer than the playing of Georges Laurent. Laurent's more careful technique, however, is noticeable in the *Badinerie*, which concludes the Suite. In general, the two albums are a close match.

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Among the single records which have been released within the past weeks, a two-piano version of Morton Gould's *Gauracha* is outstanding [Victor, 11-9759-A, \$1.00]. This fascinating study in rhythms should have wide appeal. The duopianists, Arthur Whittmore and Jack Lowe, handle the Gould composition and Lecuona's *Malaguena* in an inspired style.

A Columbia, ten-inch recording of the *Whiffenpoof Song* and *The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi* is a clinker [4500-M, \$1.00]. Charles Kullman is accompanied in this pompous performance by a male chorus and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. Kullman's rendition of these songs reminds me of the days during the war when Lawrence Tibbett was the crooner on the *Hit Parade* singing *Bell Bottom Trousers*. It becomes apparent as the record booms on that only hale and hearty beer-drinking Yale alumni and Sigma Chi can appreciate it.

THE LIBRARY



AMERICA REVIEWS ITS PAST

by BEN RAY REDMAN

THE American people's growing concern with their own recent past is surely a conspicuous and noteworthy feature of our present national scene. *Life with Father* is only the most famous, and most successful financially, of many retrospective explorations. As readers and theatre-goers, we have been invited to live with mother, uncle, aunt, and grandparents; with country doctor and lawyer, with city banker and musician, with wise rabbi and gracious hostess, of a generation or two ago. Energetic book-makers have galloped through newspaper files, to come up with entertaining and embarrassing accounts of what we were like yesterday and the day before that. We have been given fat volumes of photographs over which to laugh and blush, as we are made to review the fashions we followed, the automobiles we drove, the movies we liked, the stocks we bought, the follies we committed, one or two or three decades back. And we have also been

requested, by graver historians, to consider our national conduct with unflinching eyes, to condemn it, and to clasp heavy burdens of guilt to our bosoms.

For it is plain that those of us who are now looking backward are doing so with different motives and different emotions, and that we are deriving different kinds of satisfaction from our activity. There are probably innocent folk among us who believe that our yesterdays are truly and merely funny. But the *Life with Father* school is far from being as simple as all that; and it is a numerous school. Its members laugh as they depict and observe Father's fits of temper and Mother's instinctive domestic maneuverings; but hidden envy underlies the laughter. Father may be a figure of fun. Mother, with her absurdities, may provoke gentle mirth. But, however ridiculous he may appear when he asserts his masculine wisdom and dominance, he is a man completely sure of himself, a man who knows whence he came and where he is going, a man who knows exactly what he wants from life, and exactly how to get it. And she, with all her little

problems, requiring much nice calculation and diplomacy, triumphantly remains mistress of her family circle, and captain of her soul. Wrong he may be; but he knows, beyond all argument, that he is right. Silly she may be; but she is equal to the daily challenge confronting her. What would we — lost, fumbling, faithless and fearful — what would we not give for his certainty and her competence? What would we not give to enjoy the security of that family circle, built upon ancestral, Victorian rock? But, of course, we cannot admit our envy of progenitors who are so dated and amusing; we must, and do, conceal the depths of our yearning beneath surface laughter.

Besides the *Life with Father* school, we have backward lookers who are candidly nostalgic, who sigh audibly for the dear, departed days; but they are few, for their attitude is not fashionable. More numerous are those who would tell all, have everyone tell all, because the act of confession, involving the evacuation of memories, is for them a pleasurable and relieving business. These are the men and women of a generation that has learned to value the satisfactions and benefits of the psychoanalytic couch; disciples of a teaching which says that silence maims and destroys.

II

Among chroniclers of our recent past, there is still another type which reminds one of a sailor, storm-driven and doomed, trying feverishly, before

it is too late, to get a few historical words into a bottle, in the hope that some time, somewhere, after ship and sailor have forever vanished, the record will be found and its meaning deciphered. But, of all this retrospective company, those whose voices are most insistent, and perhaps worthy of being listened to with the most critical attention, are the penitents, and exhorters to penitence, who cry over and over: We are all miserable sinners and there is no health in us.

Now, if these voices spoke of and for mankind in general, I should not be disposed to argue with them, for there is no doubt that, through the centuries, man has proved himself to be remarkably full of sin, while his exhibitions of virtue have at best been individual, sporadic and unreliable. But when writers set out to persuade the American people that their record is a peculiarly shameful one, it is time to take careful note of the talk. And it is precisely this message which is being pounded into American minds today by many eloquent authors. That a certain amount of the pressure calculated to drive home this message originates on the extreme political left, and makes itself felt, by way of old-fashioned liberalism, even among members of the right, is comparatively unimportant. What does matter is that Americans of many political colorations are now viewing their past with a sense of guilt that is simply not warranted. Unless, of course, Americans are justified in believing that they are naturally su-

perior to the rest of humanity; in which case it might be argued, reasonably enough, that they have betrayed their native character. As I understand it, however, this is not the argument advanced by our penitential chorus.

Those who condemn us spare almost no portion of our history, but it is the present period of finance capitalism which is blackest in their eyes. The American dream is dead. The doors of opportunity are shut tight. We are all slaves; all but a little group of us, at the very top of the heap. Yesterday, under industrial capitalism, the dream was dying fast, but the slaves were fewer, because only the workers were in chains. And before that, and before? Look at the looting of the country by the railroads. At the exploitation and exhaustion of the land's resources by conscienceless enterprisers. At the cynical corruption of government by business wealth. At the abuse of power in all its forms. At the speculative greed which has subjected our economy to the hurricane forces of one panic after another, and caused suffering beyond measure. At the framers of our Constitution, who were selfishly intent upon checking the leveling spirit, upon protecting the property of the few against the possible claims of the many. But, always and above all, look at the American's frantic devotion to money, his dedicated worship of money; a religion that has claimed almost his entire being; a faith that has dried the wells of his spirit to desert dust, and

made him a creature unique in the annals of the world.

There is much truth in these charges, but they are far from presenting the whole story or even the significant part of it. For the significant part of the story is the good part, and that has been left out. One may say, without flippancy, that evil is too common to be peculiarly significant in any nation's history, except when it is found in extraordinary concentration, when it becomes the very essence of a historical moment, as it did in Germany during the climactic stages of the Third Reich.

All human history is, in considerable measure, a record of evil. You can read few paragraphs without confronting its ugliness. The bad things that have been done in the United States prove that Americans have sometimes, even often, responded to their opportunities as men have responded since times beyond memory. Americans have pursued money, the current scrip of power, because they have lived in a society sufficiently free to make the quest possible. Western man (not to mention some of his Eastern fellows) has always sought power whenever it has been possible for him to do so; whenever he has not been straitjacketed by a society so rigid as to make movement virtually impossible. In the vast majority of cases, his reach has been modest: he has acquired only sufficient power to get himself a better shelter, better food, a little more leisure, slightly better living conditions for his family.

But if we are to speak of the acquisition of vast power and of ascents to great heights, then the Old World no less than the New can furnish its spectacular examples.

What makes the American case unique is the unparalleled fluidity of our society, the fact that the struggle for money, for success, for power, has been open to so many contestants: the number of players has been uniquely large, but there is nothing unfamiliar about the character of the game. With power of various kinds, and on different levels, there has of course come corruption; for Lord Acton spoke as a wise man when he laid down his famous rule. But we should note that power has almost never before been as vulnerable to virtuous and bloodless attack as it has been in the United States; that in no other country has power permitted itself to be as vulnerable as it has permitted itself to be here. The pattern of power has never become absolutely set among us, as it has in many other instances. An energetically active idealism has always existed contemporaneously with, and interacted with, our grasping materialism. The result has been constant modifications and mitigations of the power pattern. The American way of life, which has produced the pirates and robber barons of the business world, has also produced the humanitarians and reformers whose gains have been cumulative and great through the years. And these folk are still with us, numerous and strong.

At the beginning of our national history it was said that we were "the hope of the world." It is being said now. Such words would hardly be addressed to a people especially corrupt; but they do imply a grave responsibility. The plain truth is that Americans, like all other men, should pray and strive to be better than they have been, better than they are; but they should not cripple their faith in themselves, and their ability to act, by subscribing to the melancholy belief that they are the vessels of a peculiar guilt.

III

Among recent retrospective surveys, Lloyd Morris's *Postscript to Yesterday*, with its sub-title, *America: The Last Fifty Years* [\$5, Random House] may be recommended as being informative, entertaining, and provocative of thought; although the volume itself, it must be admitted, provides little thinking that is original, since the author is chiefly content to look through other men's eyes, deal in other men's ideas, and frequently make effective use of other men's words; for this is the nature of his task as he has conceived and executed it.

In his record of the years from 1896 to 1946, Mr. Morris spares us nothing, but he is well aware that his story has its bright as well as its dark side. He has written a fragmentary history of American disenchantment during the past two generations, but he knows that our persistent idealism has often

drawn strength from disillusion in the past, and I gather that he is inclined to believe that it may do so again in these perilous times. Discontent may not be divine, but it can be exceedingly valuable on the human level; for so long as the best minds of a nation are discontented with what is, and are effectively working for what ought to be, there is no soil in which pessimism can justifiably put down its roots.

"The parallel developments of progress and disillusion are the subject of this book," writes its author, "and of the one with which I hope to follow it. The next volume will deal with what may be described as the tangible features of our civilization: industrial change under expanding finance capitalism; the relations of capital and labor; science, invention, and technology; politics; the evolution of our characteristic architecture; the effect of the movie and radio on our culture."

So we must wait for another volume before we can read as a whole Mr. Morris' "story of the American mind and heart during the past fifty years." But the book before us is in no way dependent on its promised companion, and it may be read and judged on its own merits. Indeed, each chapter of *Postscript to Yesterday* is a unit. The author speaks of himself as telling a story, and I have followed his lead, but to me his work suggests the panels of a screen, all of which are concerned with a single theme, but any one of which may be regarded

separately, and some of which are carefully painted while others are merely sketched.

Mr. Morris begins by skimming the social scene with a light and easy touch. The Newport and New York of Mrs. Astor; the somewhat livelier regime of Mrs. Stuyvesant Fish; the famous Bradley Martin ball; the money-seeking, socially insecure Society which, Henry James believed, did not believe in itself; the vivid figure of Mrs. Jack Gardner; the more professional figures of Elsie de Wolfe and Elizabeth Marbury; a world dominated by the ladies, in which their providing husbands usually played a drab and inconspicuous rôle — these are the objects of the author's initial, if somewhat hurried, attention.

From the Lady he turns to the Woman, with her new-found interests and powers, her clubs and her careers. We see her enter industry as the incarnation of low-priced labor, and watch her climb from that exploited position up the ladder to the heights of business management. We are introduced to such diverse characters as Jane Addams, Lilian D. Wald, "Mother" Jones, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn and Emma Goldman. We spend a disproportionate amount of time with Isadora Duncan.

Then come the Jazz Age, prohibition and the racketeers, night clubs and speakeasies: Texas Guinan, Dutch Schultz, Arnold Rothstein, Larry Fay. Mr. Morris amuses himself by arguing that the criminal racketeers were made of the same stuff as were

the railroad builders and the fathers of trusts; he draws a parallel between Texas Guinan and Mrs. Sty Fish, and pretends to find an identity in the economic thinking of Dutch Schultz and that of John D. Rockefeller. These activities, it may be suggested, are more entertaining than they are conducive to exact thinking.

Next we are invited to consider the pessimism of Mark Twain and the uneasy conscience of William Dean Howells. Twain shared the gloom of Henry Adams. "Looking at the United States of the dawning twentieth century, both were filled with abhorrence. Neither retained the slightest faith that the future could hold anything good." As for Howells, he shuddered when he viewed our "material expansion and sudden towering fortunes," and believed that we could be saved by nothing less radical than a "spiritual reorientation."

After the old masters come the young skeptics. Stephen Crane, who saw men as the victims of blind chance; Jack London, rebel, socialist, who lost faith and chewed on the ashes of success; Dreiser, the fumbling giant; Willa Cather, skeptical towards the present, eulogistic of the past.

And then we are furnished new eyes with which to view the American scene, new voices to which to listen: the eyes and voices of Sinclair Lewis (whose "novels reported that the fruit of material success was spiritual frustration"); Mencken and THE

AMERICAN MERCURY; Sherwood Anderson, who saw his countrymen's lives as purposeless and empty; Scott Fitzgerald, spokesman of defeatism; Hemingway, who looked upon modern society as "a vast conspiracy" to deny the dignity and worth of the individual; Erskine Caldwell and William Faulkner, interpreters of the decadent South; James Farrell, proletarian, who piled up evidence that "the American dream had become a tawdry and meaningless myth"; and John Steinbeck, who found crimes in our society that were "beyond denunciation."

The theatre has its turn next, with space given to Clyde Fitch and his plays tailored for the carriage trade; Eugene O'Neill, whose basic concern is "the disorientation of the individual"; the Algonquin Round Table and its self-conscious knights; the solid talents of Sidney Howard, George Kelly and Maxwell Anderson; the "faith" and "poetic intuition" of Clifford Odets; and the comedies of Barry, Behrman and van Druten.

Press follows theatre, and magazines follow newspapers. The author studies the careers of Pulitzer and Hearst, and the rise of yellow journalism; and he deals more briefly with Ochs of the *Times*, White of the *Emporia Gazette*, and Patterson of the *News*.

When he reaches the magazine field, he has fun with Edward Bok, Grand Lama of the *Matrons*, and pays his critical respects to the Luce publications, the *Reader's Digest*, the

"comic books," and pseudo-scientific pulp fiction. But it is when he comes to S. S. McClure, his industrious and brilliant staff, and the whole muck-raking era, that Mr. Morris does, in my opinion, his best and most thorough job. This section of *Postscript to Yesterday* has a substantiality that some other sections lack.

The author is excellent, too, in his treatment of the characters and ideas of William James, who spent his life looking for a philosophy by which to live, Oliver Wendell Holmes, the liberal skeptic, and Louis D. Brandeis, liberal crusader and exponent of living law; although, in connection with pragmatism, Mr. Morris fails to do justice to Charles Peirce. In this same panel we encounter the ideas of John Dewey, who gives us our choice between capitalistic socialism and public socialism; the Adams brothers (Henry, Charles Francis, Brooks), pessimists all, and all of them interesting; William G. Sumner, who went on to write *Folkways* after having been the philosophical apologist of the Gilded Age; and Thorstein Veblen, perhaps the most stimulating of all our economic and social critics.

Finally we come to the guides of the spirit; to Christian Science, New Thought, the Four Square Gospel, astrology; to Mary Baker Eddy, Orison Swett Marden, Aimee Semple McPherson, and Evangeline Adams. The popularity of these faiths and their exponents leads Mr. Morris to conclude that Americans are a troubled people who feel the need of help.

The conclusion is sound enough, but the author fails to remark that the human condition mentioned is one familiar to all readers of history.

IV

The failure, it must be noted, is characteristic. Too often Mr. Morris writes from the comparatively low vantage point of the journalist, rather than from the commanding watch tower of the historian; too often he emphasizes as American traits that are merely human. Other lacks and biases must be noted, too, in a volume that is always interesting even when it is most superficial. The author is obviously more attracted by the first two decades of his chosen period than he is by the succeeding decades. He is firmly rooted on the Eastern seaboard, and exhibits little real concern with life west of the Hudson and the New England States. He mentions the fact that the United States has participated in two world wars during the period of his survey, but he barely mentions it. He takes no cognizance of the effects of these wars upon the American people, of war's tremendous contribution to the sum of our disillusionment. But most important of all is his failure to relate the American experience of the past fifty years to the world experience during the same period; his failure to view his parochial subject within its oecumenical setting.

Nothing has happened to the American dream that has not happened to the world dream. The failure of faith,

which shook the generation of Arnold and Clough, has been followed by what we call the failure of nerve; and we see fugitives taking off in all directions. But any attempt to isolate American disenchantment with life as it is, any attempt to view it as a thing apart, simply does not make sense. This is a kind of intellectual isolationism that cannot be justified, that cannot work, for an instant. It is a pity that *Postscript to Yesterday*, with all its valuable information and its potential popularity, should be so conceived as to encourage this kind of fallacious thinking.

In conclusion, let me mention three books that may well be read in company with Mr. Morris's. Unfortunately, I can only mention them in the space that remains. They are Burton Rascoe's *We Were Interrupted* [\$4, Doubleday], *Portrait of Edith Wharton* [\$3, Appleton], by Percy Lubbock and *America in Perspective* [\$4, Random House], edited by Henry Steele Commager. The first provides, among other things, a spirited account of life in literary-journalistic New York during the Twenties, before the arrival of the Marxian blight, written by a man who was at the center of the scene, and who enjoyed every minute of a vigorous, battling, completely candid, critical career. The second is a full-length study, by one of England's most polished writers, of a Lady (and something more, of course) who belonged conspicuously to the period of Mr. Morris's study. And the third is a symposium in which thirty-

five foreign observers of the United States — from Crèvecoeur, who became a naturalized American in 1765, to Victor Vine, who visited us in 1942, tell us how we have looked to them. The Newport sketched by Mr. Morris is here described with astonishment by Paul Bourget; we are condescended to as boys by Salvador de Madariaga; Denis Brogan proves that he understands the function of our public schools better than most of us do; Münsterberg ingeniously defends the American "passion for money"; Matthew Arnold assures us that America is not interesting; Chesterton asserts paradoxically that America is an old and dying country; and many another critic of our culture has his say, which often tells us as much about the speaker as it does about ourselves.

But whatever we are told, by our fellow countrymen or by foreigners, let us never forget that the American experience of the past few decades is explicable and understandable only as part of the world experience. Our failure, such as it has been, has been part of a larger failure; our disenchantment has been but a fraction of a vaster disenchantment. We need admit no special guilt, but we are, beyond doubt, in the midst of present troubles, assuming a special responsibility. We can only hope that Mr. Commager will once again be justified in his generalization: "America has, on the whole, confounded her critics where they were pessimistic rather than where they were optimistic."

THE CHECK LIST



(Continued from page 645)

why the "independent" voter ought to be "condemned as a shirker," how the "sons, daughters, husbands, wives of the district leaders are taken care of in some way or other," and how the late Mayor LaGuardia achieved his political miracles in New York City, nearly all of whose machine politicians were against him. Mr. Flynn's conclusion is that "while bosses are inevitable under our system of government, bad bosses are not. For in the last analysis . . . you're the boss." Mr. Flynn is not quite so naïve as this last statement makes him out to be, for he admits that unseating a boss and his machine is "difficult. . . . It cannot be done in a year. In some cases it cannot be done for many years." Perhaps some day he will write another book showing why this is so. The publisher boasts that Mr. Flynn "has actually written his own book." In that case it must be pointed out that he writes far more clearly and gracefully than many columnists and editorial writers.

FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM, *A History of American Negroes*, by John Hope Franklin. \$5.00. Knopf. This is an almost painfully dispassionate account of the tribulations of American Negroes, beginning with a survey of their pre-slavery status in Africa and ending with a discussion of their part in World War II. Professor Franklin states in his preface that he "attempted to avoid a subjective and unscientific treatment of the subject." In this he has been successful, but the product is some 600 pages of hard facts which are neither woven into any interpretive patterns nor relieved by any general discussions of such sociological problems as miscegenation, "passing," comparative intelligence, etc.

THE NEW SLAVERY, by Hoffman Nickerson. \$3.50. Doubleday. Mr. Nickerson believes that modern slavery — he is referring especially to Soviet forced labor — "is the logical goal of 'welfare legislation,' the wrong turning taken by modern social reform under Bismarck." In attempting to prove that each new scheme for social insurance or relief is merely another nail in the coffin of freedom, the author often appears to adopt the viewpoint of a feudal baron. The economic arrangements of medieval society appear to him to have been a great success, and his book contains repeated references to the benevolent rôle played in civic affairs by the propertied classes. He regards the existence of a proletariat as a great misfortune, which could be remedied in part if the workers only had enough sense to save their money and buy property. Mr. Nickerson also has an unfortunate tendency to get bogged down in discussions of the "Jewish problem," a theme which seems to have an enormous fascination for him, and which draws from him uncomfortably vague references. His material on Soviet forced labor, however, is sober, factual and detailed. It is an important contribution.

MUSIC

THE MUSICAL WORKSHOP, by Frederick Dorian. \$4.00. Harper. Dr. Dorian, who is professor of music at Carnegie Institute of Technology, here attempts a truly original investigation, to wit, "tracing the creative process in music from the first inspirational vision of a work to its finished score." Calling upon a vast amount of learning in almost every realm of musicology, he discusses composers' moods, habits, humor, living quarters, environment, personal ecstasies and

tragedies, and dozens of other matters that in any way have influenced a composer's inspiration or the direction his revising and polishing took. While this volume is largely addressed to professionals, who will find it of first importance, there are vast stretches of it that should appeal to the general music lover.

THE MUSSORGSKY READER, translated and edited by Jay Leyda and Sergei Bertensson. \$6.00. *Norton*. A great deal of melodramatic piffle has been written about the truly great composer of *Boris Godunov* and *Khovanshchina*, but this is the first time that his life has been set down with fidelity to the facts. This biography, indeed, is told almost entirely in terms of documents, most of them letters by, to, and about Mussorgsky. The translations are readable and seem to be meticulous. At the end are very useful bibliographical notes, together with a fairly complete annotated listing of Mussorgsky's works on records, compiled by Philip L. Miller. Altogether, a first-rate contribution to musicology.

THE ARTS

THE THEATRE BOOK OF THE YEAR 1946-1947, by George Jean Nathan. \$4.00. *Knopf*. Mr. Nathan's latest annual, covering the period between May 6, 1946 and April 29, 1947, is as good as its predecessors, which is to say, it is probably the most useful and most penetrating book of record and comment on the American stage that is available. In his foreword Mr. Nathan takes up the increasing acceptance of the Negro actor on the white stage, the bogus enthusiasts of the dance and the latest battle between the playwrights and the critics begun by Miss Lillian Hellman, who was embarrassed by the critical reception given her play, *Another Part of the Forest*. Readers of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY*, where Mr. Nathan's comments on the playwright-critic battle substantially first appeared, will recall with what thoroughness he disposes of Miss Hellman's complaints. There are two indices, one of plays and another of authors and composers.

EL GRECO, by Maurice Legendre. \$6.00. *Hyperion Press*. The distinguished European art

critic and historian here supplies a fine general discussion of the work of the Spanish master, and his comments are greatly aided by sixteen full-color and some fifty black and white reproductions. An excellent bibliography has been appended.

ADDAMS AND EVIL, by Charles Addams, with an introduction by Wolcott Gibbs. \$2.75. *Random House*. As Mr. Gibbs states in his introduction to this volume of cartoons, Mr. Addams' work involves "a total and melodramatic re-arrangement of all life." This technique is generally successful in the cartoons presented here: it is fun to watch Mr. Addams' pleasant-looking suburbanites commit the most monstrous (and inexplicable) atrocities against their fellows. The little boy taking violin lessons pulls a machine gun from his case and cuts down his teacher; the placid, pipe-smoking country gentleman prepares to burn his wife to death in a pile of leaves he has just finished raking; the boy studying carpentry at school proceeds to build a coffin. Those of Mr. Addams' cartoons which depend on physical distortion (on women with three arms, men with one eye, dwarfs, etc.) seem to be less successful.

HISTORY

MIXED TRAINS DAILY, by Lucius Beebe. \$12.75. *Dutton*. This book should delight the vast multitude of men, women and children whose hearts lift whenever they see a train pass by or hear a train whistle blow. Mr. Beebe, an old railroad fan, has here struck railroad gold: the mixed (passenger and freight) short lines (some of them only a few miles long, and one of them owning but one engine) that dot nearly every nook and corner of this railroad-studded land. These trains often travel on rickety rails, their engines are almost pre-historic, and they come and go pretty much by whim rather than timetable. But they perform services and they add a glamor to their localities and to the nation as a whole that is distinctly American. Mr. Beebe writes about them — hardly a one is omitted in this grand book — with feeling and out of a fund of vast knowledge. There are some 300 photographs taken by himself and by C. M.

Clegg, Jr., and color plates of six original oil paintings by Howard Fogg. Finally, it must be said that the publishers have done very handsomely by the book.

RED HANNAH, *Delaware's Whipping Post*, by Robert Graham Caldwell. \$3.00. *Pennsylvania*. The whipping post is the last vestige of legalized corporal punishment in the United States. It has been used for three centuries in Delaware, which is the only state to retain it, and in this slender volume Mr. Caldwell makes out an apparently invincible argument for its abolition. He cites figures which demonstrate that it has not been a deterrent to crime, and any number of his case histories suggest very strongly that whipping has only a brutalizing effect on those who suffer it. Altogether, a closely-reasoned, well-documented work. A number of photographs add force to the author's argument.

FICTION

ADVERSARY IN THE HOUSE, by Irving Stone. \$3.00. *Doubleday*. Like all of Mr. Stone's novels, this one, based on the life of Eugene V. Debs, is enormously readable. The story is focused on the conflict between Debs, whose battles for social justice absorbed him completely, and his wife, who emerges in these pages as a rather disagreeable social climber. Unfortunately, Mr. Stone has succumbed in spots to the obvious temptations of this soap-opera theme; in order to heighten the conflict he has portrayed his hero as rather more selfless than any human being could possibly be. The passages describing the Debses' home life, which presumably are based more upon conjecture than the rest of the book, are frequently a strain on the readers' credibility.

DIRTY EDDIE, by Ludwig Bemelmans. \$2.75. *Viking*. This is a satire on Hollywood and the fabulous citizens who reside there, done in the author's second-best manner. The characters are enchanting, particularly Dirty Eddie, the pig who almost ruined the picture he was in by growing too fast — though part of the blame might be laid on those who shot the end of the picture first, thereby causing him to grow smaller as the film progressed. But Mr. Bemelmans' theme has been

overworked and his novel is episodic rather than unified. The serious passages of the book are generally unsuccessful.

MISCELLANEOUS

SPEAKING OF ANIMALS, by Alan Devoe. \$3.00. *Creative Age*. There are thirty chapters here on the ways of animals in general and on the ways of various individual animals — among them the toad, the raccoon, the red squirrel, the great blue heron, the newt, the snapping turtle, the otter, the crayfish, the hummingbird and the vulture. Several of the chapters have previously appeared in *THE AMERICAN MERCURY*, to the immense delight of its readers. These readers and many others will want to have this volume, for it is highly informative, beautifully written and filled with a profound and soothing wisdom. There is a large number of excellent photographs.

EXISTENTIALISM, by Jean-Paul Sartre. \$2.75. *Philosophical Library*. The current excitement in the literary worlds of France, England and the United States is existentialism, whose leader is Jean-Paul Sartre, a French philosopher and academician. This volume is a translation (by Bernard Frechtman) of an explanatory lecture by Sartre delivered in Paris in 1945. He insists that the existentialist doctrine is "intended strictly for specialists and philosophers." It may be believed in, he says, by both Christians and atheists, for all that is necessary for them to subscribe to it is "that existence precedes essence, or, if you prefer, that subjectivity must be the starting point." Viewed from another angle, this means that man is a wholly free animal, that he cannot and does not and must not depend on authority outside himself, that man "with no support and no aid, is condemned every moment to invent man," and that "actually, things will be as man will have decided they are to be." If this mumbo-jumbo means anything it is that man, to cite an ancient and honorable truism, is to a large extent the architect of his own fortune. Of course, if it were stated in these humble words, existentialism would hardly achieve the status of a movement — and writers would have to stop arguing about nothing and return to the hard work of writing.

THE OPEN FORUM



SEX AND THE DOUBLE STANDARD

SIR: I have just finished reading [in the October MERCURY] "Sex and the Double Standard" by Waverley Root with much interest. I note that he says a wife whose husband has successfully weathered many extra-marital affairs and returned happily to her should really feel flattered. I am such a wife and I do not feel flattered. May I digress a little to tell you why?

The human male, according to Mr. Root (and I would not dispute his thorough knowledge of the subject) employs two kinds of polygamy: the legal type found in non-white areas; and the social type found in all so-called white nations. The social brand seems equally divided between the openly frank double standard of the Latin countries, where infidelity in marriage of the male is socially encouraged and the Anglo-Saxon variety, where it is omnipresent but openly discouraged by the pulpit, the ideals of true love (however absurd and impractical) and public opinion in general. Now, if a woman had to choose between the three, I imagine most women would take social hypocrisy as the best of a bad bargain. But having been a very successful wife (I wanted to give my husband up each time he came home "refreshed," but he never wanted to give me up, sap that I was! for I raised his children to be brilliant and healthy and beautiful, I kept his house spic and span, entertained for him, corrected his manuscripts and let no shadow of gossip fall upon me!) under the best circumstances the polygamous male has to offer, I would, if I could turn the clock back, choose another, very different course. I would be completely promiscuous, self-centered and childless. Why?

Because my marriage, for all its seeming solidarity and fine fruits of progeny, is not worth a damn to me. This "little woman" does not thrill to her "big bad manikin's" embraces when he

canters in, all rosy and hearty from other arms. No, I hate him with suppressed ferocity and I endure his embraces with a disgust that, in his infinite conceit, he never dreams. I loathe his bad breath and sickly sweetness after a spree and if we lived in another age, I would gleefully cut his vitals out some night and throw them in his face. But we don't. This is America and I am sophisticated. I smile and ignore the lies and put up a front. But in spite of this, my children suspect that I am not happy and they are not happy because of it. If I should speak the truth to my lovely daughter it would be to tell her never to marry but to play the field.

I would also, if I dared, tell her and all the other young things coming along with dewy eyes and brimming hearts, that marriage, contrary to public opinion, is man's invention, not woman's; that without it, he would be a very unimportant creature; that only through this institution does he have meaning and continuity; that it is the basis of his society. Without marriage, women continue to be mothers and to control their children as long as they wish — which in the animal world is not too long! . . .

Now, since marriage is man's own idea, he should treat it with some respect. Since he doesn't, actually, how about exposing the whole hoax (thanks to Mr. Root who has made a nice start) and kicking the cheap sham to pieces? . . .

A DEVOTED WIFE

New York City

SILK VS. SYNTHETICS

SIR: In the August issue of THE AMERICAN MERCURY, Mr. Robert E. Ellsworth in his article "The Raw Silk Bonanza" says: "Manufacturers who produced large quantities of silk dress goods early in 1946 found women shoppers

tended to buy the cheaper and more beautifully finished synthetics." The reason is obvious. No doubt there were beautifully finished and well designed silks for exclusive trade but those reaching the counters for the general public were of poor texture and color and the prints were uninteresting and trite. Give the women a chance to buy silks of rich, deep textures, choice colors and artistic designs and they will buy them — or I miss my guess.

M. H. CUNNINGHAM

Ithaca, N. Y.

SIR: I don't doubt for a moment that more women would buy silk dresses of rich, deep textures, choice colors and artistic designs — if the price were right! From what I can gather, this price should range from \$12.50 to \$16.75 and slightly higher. To do this, textile men tell me, the raw silk would have to be obtained at \$3 per pound or less — thus supporting my original contention that there are no fortunes and little profit to be made in domestic sericulture.

ROBERT B. ELLSWORTH

Baldwin, L. I., N. Y.

RADIO COMMENTATORS

SIR: Giraud Chester's piece on radio commentators was pretty thin soup. [See "Power of the Radio Commentator" in the September MERCURY.] I yield to no one in my distaste for certain commentators, and also several newspaper columnists, but Chester's report (mind you, after a year's investigation) was sloppily done, even considering the limitations of space.

Some of his proof material indicates a personal bias not compatible with scholarly research and casts doubt upon his selection methods. For example, Don Hollenbeck's smart-alec crack about the singing commercial, whatever the intrinsic merit of it, justified his dismissal, and had no place at all in Chester's article. Let Chester try a similar stunt at Cornell and see how long he would last.

Chester writes, "But the fact of almost complete public confidence in these men [commentators] whether justified or not, has an inherent danger." What does he mean by "the fact of almost complete public confidence?" Certainly no such "fact" has been shown. Increasing interest in radio news in no wise can be construed as proof of "public confidence." Rather, there is a healthy, widespread skepticism.

He asks, "Who decides which commentators shall be available for selection by the public?"

Obviously, the networks, the sponsor or the ad agency. And why not? Who else should have that authority? A professor's Brain Trust? Who decided to hire Chester at Cornell? The people who run Cornell. Who else should? The government?

Chester is worried about the formal educational qualifications of commentators. He says commentators should be employed at least by as high standards as those used by colleges in hiring professors. That is letting down the bars.

"To ask that commentators be willing to match the record of their analyses and predictions against the record of history would not appear to be unfair." Oh, brother! Only a scholar could have written that. Such a test would empty the halls of Congress, vacate the White House at any time in history, and yes, create a terrific shortage of college professors.

Chester says, "In a controversy with the Columbia Broadcasting System, the commentators won a hard-fought battle to protect their freedom to editorialize on the air." No such thing, as a bit of checking on a cub reporter's level would have shown. Refer to Paul White's *News on the Air*.

But Mr. Chester's last paragraph is the "beaut" of his little piece. He sums up by asserting that when certain evaluated information is available we can know "whether radio commentators should continue to be given the power to express opinions on all subjects, before millions of listeners . . ." For Mr. Chester's scholarly information, there is yet no power in this free nation to decide that, regardless of his recommendations. By the way, the Constitution and Bill of Rights make mighty interesting reading on any dull day in a researcher's life.

There is much to be said against crackpots on the air, but censorship, implied by Chester, is like burning the house down to get rid of bedbugs.

The kindest thing to be said about Chester's piece is that it wouldn't qualify him to become a radio commentator or newspaper columnist even under present standards.

PHIL KERBY

News Editor, KGHF

Pueblo, Col.

SIR: (1) The Don Hollenbeck incident was mentioned to suggest the extent of advertiser domination of radio, including the commentators. Many people thought that his dismissal was not completely justified. After a storm of public criticism, his sponsor re-hired him.

(2) When only 18 per cent are willing to say that commentators are unfair or biased, it seems

safe to infer that the remaining 82 per cent have considerable confidence. This inference is supported by more direct studies of public attitudes toward commentators. When Mr. Kerby says "there is a healthy, widespread skepticism," he merely mistakes his personal opinion for a public opinion, and runs directly counter to the evidence produced by scientific surveys, including those commissioned by the broadcasters themselves.

(3) The station managements who are licensed to run radio should, of course, do the hiring. The sponsors and the agencies are not licensed to run radio. Advertisers are not usually permitted to hire the editorial staff of the newspaper in which they advertise their wares; why should they in radio?

(4) It is true that university teaching standards have dropped under the pressure of overwhelming enrollments, but I do not know of any university employing high school graduates to teach college freshmen.

(5) The idea of examining the public record of well-known individuals is certainly not original with me. One of the reasons we do empty the halls of Congress occasionally is that enough voters take the time to acquaint themselves with the record to effect a change in personnel. I merely suggest that we do the same with commentators.

(6) Paul White was the CBS spokesman in the 1943 controversy. As a direct party to the dispute with an interest at stake, White certainly does not expect to be considered the final or sole authority.

(7) If Mr. Kerby thinks that "there is yet no power in this free nation" to decide whether radio commentators should be allowed to express opinions on all subjects, he apparently is unaware of the policy of the Columbia Broadcasting System, whose executives act on the theory that they have precisely that power.

(8) Mr. Kerby need not have been so kind. I have already been a radio commentator over facilities with considerably more power than the station for which he does his daily chores.

GIRAUD CHESTER

Ithaca, N. Y.

PEARL BUCK AND SINCLAIR LEWIS

SIR: The naïve and professorial suggestion in the September "Soap Box" of "Harvard Professor" that Pearl Buck and Sinclair Lewis return their Nobel and Pulitzer prize money is amusing. Some writers who make their living because

they are at home with words have said that teachers of English are notoriously poor writers. Be that as it may, our critic seems to have lost sight of the fact that the prize committees decided in favor of Mrs. Buck and Mr. Lewis because they considered their work to be superior, and not for the reason that they considered the work of other authors lacking in merit.

If "Harvard Professor" wishes to popularize the works of Willa Cather and other excellent authors, he might head a subscription list for that purpose. Mrs. Buck and Mr. Lewis might be quite willing to subscribe also.

HASKELD BOND

Cincinnati, O.

SENATOR TAYLOR'S RECORD

SIR: In Robert Shankland's amusing and informative article on politicians whose platforms consisted mainly of hillbilly songs [see "Songs and Fiddles in U. S. Politics" in the August *MERCURY*], there is one misleading half-truth. This is in his section on Taylor of Idaho.

If Mr. Shankland is interested in what he calls "this abusive treatment of the democratic processes," then he should take heart from the fact that Senator Taylor did not win election until, in 1944, he changed his tactics and campaigned without cowboy regalia. His winning campaign consisted of speeches on issues, his two major issues being the need for a Columbia Valley Authority like the TVA, and for a world organization with sufficient power to keep the peace. One may disagree with Taylor on both these points, but I do not think one can dismiss them as buffoonery, or as showing "irrelevance to statesmanship."

Speaking of statesmanship — it is, I grant, in the eye of the beholder, but even New Deal-hating publications like *Business Week* concede that Taylor has set a model for not ducking issues. He is the only member of Congress to propose that each member's complete voting record be tabulated, with a brief explanation of the issues voted upon, and distributed as a public document. On the issues he believes in, such as price control, he has unequivocally defied special-interest pressures, including those strongest in his state. It may be impractical of Mr. Taylor to proceed on the assumption that the people as a whole recognize the general interest when they see it, as he says they do — but it is unstatesmanlike, Mr. Shankland?

As for Taylor's intellectual background, I agree that it does not look like good training for a

Senator. But reading his speeches, or excerpts from them, is ample proof that he is master of a style at once lucid, dignified, and effective. Vardis Fisher says, "I believe Glen Taylor is probably one of the greatest speakers of our time." John Gunther discusses Taylor at length in *Inside U. S. A.*, and warns against the mistake of thinking him another Pappy O'Daniel — a mistake which Robert Shankland could have avoided by a little research.

I suggest that Mr. Shankland read Gunther's biography of the Senator — or my article, which is to appear in a future issue of the reference work, *Current Biography*.

MARIAN PRINCE

New York City

SIR: I share Marian Prince's admiration for the courage, integrity, and eloquence of Senator Taylor. My article, however, was not concerned with these matters; it was concerned with the development of the hillbilly technique in political campaigning, to which Senator Taylor has made a contribution that, however much it embarrasses his friends, is undeniable. In allowing himself to be publicized as a banjo-strumming cowpoke, Senator Taylor, like Pappy O'Daniel and Happy Chandler before him, succeeded in catching the nation's eye as freshman Senators rarely do.

He also, unfortunately, vitiated his subsequent accomplishments on the Senate floor. Today, I think, he is still widely regarded, even if not by Miss Prince, John Gunther or myself, as a clown, and I trust that Miss Prince's *Current Biography* article, in the interest of the whole truth, does not fail to explain why this is so.

ROBERT SHANKLAND

New York City

YOUTH AND THE DICTATORS

SIR: I wish to comment on the statement by Mr. G. P. Smith in the September issue [see "The Soap Box"], that it is the young people rather than the old who follow the Hitlers, Stalins and Peróns.

It is quite true that old people on the whole are more resistant to demagogues; but that is because they — with many exceptions, of course — are more resistant to change of any kind.

But it is this resistance to change that makes dictators possible. . . .

GLADYS I. NYE

Kansas City, Mo.

RELIGION AND RATIONALISM

SIR: "Down to Earth" is a good motto. If we would only heed it and completely forget heaven, this would be a vastly better world. It is this asinine habit we have of flirting with heaven which is responsible for about half of the world's troubles.

Alan Devoe speaks of two classes of men, the scientific and the religious [see "Down to Earth" in the September *MERCURY*], though he does not exactly describe them as does the great Persian poet, "Intelligent men without religion and religious men without intelligence." Were this Persian living today, he would be obliged to make another category — intelligent men devoid of moral courage and with no ability to rid themselves of their preconceived or juvenile notions. In other words, spineless vertebrates, vaccinated in youth with anti-rational virus.

These intellectual mongrels by the normal processes of logic — with which they are not unfamiliar — readily perceive the absurdities of religion — especially the fundamentals of Christian theology — yet continue to conform more or less, either because of having been indoctrinated in youth with superstitious absurdities, or they find it politic and "good business" not to allow their true beliefs to be known on account of the intolerance of most Christian cults.

IRA D. CARDIFF

Yakima, Wash.

THE VOICE OF THE DYING SWAN

SIR: In the September "Skeptics' Corner" by Bergen Evans there appeared an item entitled "Swan song of the swan song." The writer derided the idea that the "erstwhile *silent swan*" could "herald his own demise." It is not entirely convincing. If the dying swan does not sing it is not because he lacks the ability to do so. I do not know the origin of the legend of the swan-song, but that beautiful, graceful bird has attracted the admiration of men from antiquity. We remember that Jupiter changed himself into the form of a swan in order to woo Leda, a mortal. And the supernatural Swan-maidens belong to Norse Mythology.

It is true that one variety of swans is voiceless. That is the Mute Swan of Europe, the tame swan of the parks and lagoons. But the others are vocal. The *Britannica* speaks of two other varieties oc-

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curring in Europe which are distinguished from the Mute Swan "by the possession of loud and resonant voices (hence the legend of the 'swan-song')."

The *University Encyclopedia* states that: "The stories about the musical voice of the swan, though greatly embellished by early writers, appear to have some foundation in fact so far as regards the 'whooper' (C. Musicus). T. Rymer Jones says, 'The dying swan, we find, has nothing peculiar in its notes, but its last cries may be as loud and musical as any others to which it has given utterance.' In *Birds of America* Edward Howe Forbush, an ornithologist, wrote: "The song of the dying Swan has been regarded as a pleasing myth for many years, but Elliot asserts that he heard it once at Curricket Sound, when a Swan, mortally wounded in the air, set its wings and, sailing slowly down, began its death-song, continuing it until it reached the water 'nearly half a mile away.' The song was unlike any other Swan note that he had ever heard. It was plaintiff and musical and sounded at times like the soft running of an octave. Inquiry among local gunners revealed the fact that some had heard similar sounds from Swans that had been fatally hurt. Need we wonder that the Swan was a favorite bird of mythology?" . . .

It may be that the account of the British Columbia game warden as related is fantastic and unbelievable, but it is well known that birds, particularly water fowl, are sometimes found dead and dying in numbers from some epidemic of disease or poisoning. Whatever the facts of that incident may be, it would seem certain that the swan, "erstwhile" or otherwise, with the exception noted, is by no means voiceless. Mr. Evans' case fails.

C. R. HOPEWELL

Waterville, Wash.

SIR: The erstwhility of the swan's muteness which your correspondent so triumphantly challenges was no allegation of mine. It is a part of the popular belief which I was deriding. I am delighted to have Mr. Hopewell's assistance in slaying these dragons but I wish he'd watch his back-swing; he's hitting his own side.

I am aware that swans make noises. I have heard them. In *Harper's* for December 1946 I joined my voice to those who are bewailing the extermination of the Trumpeter and Whistling swans.

Who is this "plaintiff" swan he alludes to? Has it, perchance, retained him as counsel.

And let Leda have her swyve to her reserved.

BERGEN EVANS

Evanston, Ill.

CHRISTMAS SEALS



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AGAINST TUBERCULOSIS

SAVE WHEAT...

SAVE MEAT

SAVE THE PEACE

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC. REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AND MARCH 3, 1933

of *The American Mercury*, published monthly at Concord, N. H., for October 1, 1947. State of New York, County of New York, ss. Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Joseph W. Ferman, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of *The American Mercury* and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 411, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit: 1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business manager are: *Publisher and Editor*, Lawrence E. Spivak, 570 Lexington Ave., New York; *Managing Editor*, Charles Angoff, 570 Lexington Ave., New York; *Business Manager*, Joseph W. Ferman, 570 Lexington Ave., New York. 2. That the owners are: *The American Mercury, Inc.*, Lawrence E. Spivak, 570 Lexington Ave., N. Y.; Joseph W. Ferman, 570 Lexington Ave., N. Y.; Mildred Falk, 570 Lexington Ave., N. Y. 3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None. 4. That the two paragraphs next above, giving the names of the owners, stockholders, and security holders, if any, contain not only the list of stockholders and security holders as they appear upon the books of the company but also, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting, is given; also the said two paragraphs contain statements embracing affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner; and this affiant has no reason to believe that any other person, association, or corporation has any interest direct or indirect in the said stock, bonds, or other securities than as so stated by him. J. W. Ferman, *Business Manager*. Sworn to and subscribed before me, this 17th day of September, 1947. Ethel M. Shields, *Notary Public*. [Seal] (My commission expires March 30, 1948.)

Dear Mercury Reader:

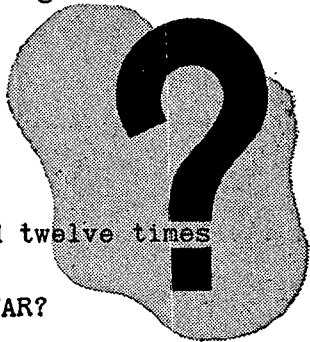
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Entertains yet informs . . .

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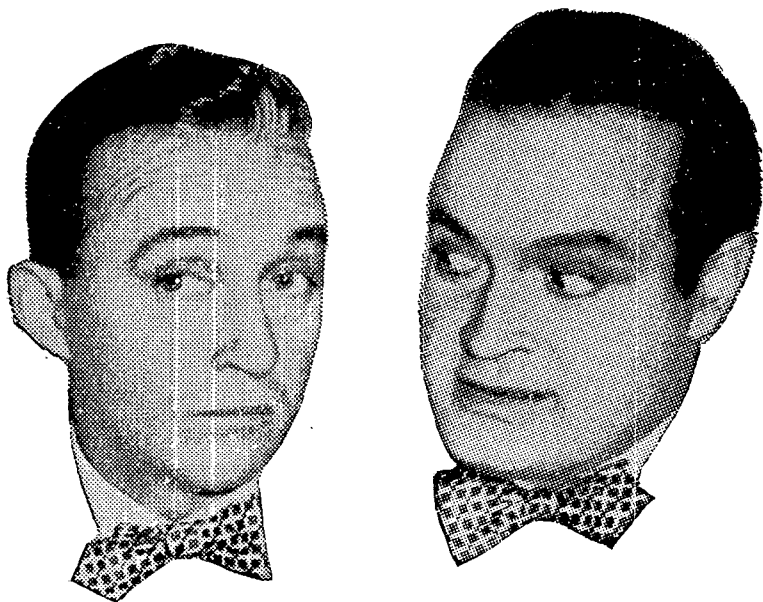
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But there's one thing they really do agree on—they both think U.S. Savings Bonds make wonderful Christmas gifts!

SAYS BOB: "They're swell for *anybody* on your list. You couldn't pick a nicer, more sensible, more welcome present. Even Crosby knows that."

SAYS BING: "I hate to admit it, folks, but Hope is right. And remember this—you can buy Bonds at any bank or post office in the U.S.A."

BOB AND BING (together): "This Christmas, why not give the finest gift of all—U.S. Savings Bonds!"

Give the finest gift of all ... U.S. SAVINGS BONDS

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